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CABHN FEVER

Low-Cost or Free Health Coverage for Your Family Is Available

Now many working families earning up to \$50,000 a year and more can get HUSKY coverage for children under age 19. And, depending on income, parents, pregnant women, or relatives caring for children may also be covered.

With a HUSKY health card, you can get health care services including:

- ✓ doctor's visits
- ✓ emergency care & hospital stays
- ✓ prescription drugs
- ✓ mental health visits
- ✓ dental and vision care, and more



It's easy to apply! To find out more call 1-877-CT-HUSKY.

Questions & Answers about Work and Disabilities

Q. Do I meet the definition of "disabled"?

A. It is not always clear whether a person has a disability protected by the law. Generally, you must have a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits a major life activity, such as seeing, hearing, walking, learning or working. To be protected from job discrimination, you must be qualified to do the important (essential) duties of the job with or without "reasonable accommodation". (See question on "reasonable accommodation").

Q. Does disability mean something different in social security programs?

A. Yes. The definition of disability that protects workers from job discrimination is different from the definition that qualifies a person for federal disability benefits. Generally, to get social security disability or SSI, a person must be *unable* to hold a job.

Your Welfare Assistance May End Soon!!



Beginning October 1, 2001, most families receiving cash benefits will be limited to an initial 21 months of benefits plus only three 6-month extensions. There are exceptions to these limits, **BUT you need to ask** the Department of Social Services for an exception. *Note: TFA (Temporary Family Assistance) is also known as state welfare.*

If you have problems like:

- Lack of available child care
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Severe mental and/or physical health problems
- Severe learning disability
- A child with serious physical and/or mental health problems
- Domestic violence
- Working 35 hours a week and still earning below the TFA monthly benefit amount
- Working less than 35 hours a week because you (or someone you care for) are disabled

...you may qualify for additional extensions of TFA cash assistance.

Do the Following 3 Things to Protect Your Rights If You're Losing TFA Benefits:

- 1** Go to your exit interview to see if you qualify for an exception.
- 2** If you live in public housing, tell the Housing Authority (in writing) that you will be losing benefits and that your rent should be lowered. **If you have a Section 8 or RAP certificate**, in writing tell the Housing Authority or the Agency which gave you the certificate that your rent should be lowered because you will be losing benefits.
- 3** Call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 or (860) 344-0380, if:
 - You have been denied TFA cash benefits,
 - Your TFA benefits have been reduced,
 - Your TFA cash benefits have ended because you reached a time limit, or
 - The Housing Authority or Agency refuses to lower your rent due to your reaching a TFA time limit. ♦

Except for victims of domestic violence, **almost all Connecticut families are limited to 60 months of TFA cash assistance** in their lifetime. This limit includes any benefits the family may have received from other states.

Q. What CAN'T an employer do?

A. Federal and state laws say an employer **cannot**:

- ✗ ask you questions about your medical condition until *after* a job offer is made.
- ✗ tell others about your medical condition (except for insurance reasons).
- ✗ harass or discriminate against you based on your disability or on the belief that you have (or had) a disability. Discrimination is when you are not treated equally because of your disability. *However*, not all discrimination is illegal.
- ✗ refuse to hire you because you can't do things that are **not** essential to the job.

(continued...see Disabilities page 2)

Celebration for a Friend



Last October Billy Smith, a best friend to low-income advocates and CABHN, passed away. Billy touched the lives of many through his actions and words. To commemorate his life, many of his friends invite you to Hartford's South Green Park for a tree planting and ceremony on Friday, Oct. 19 at 11am. We'll lunch at The Keg after.

We're also starting "Billy's Fund", an emergency fund for residents of Peter's Retreat where Billy lived for a number of years. This fund will be available to purchase essential but incidental items not available through other sources. These items could include winter boots or funeral expenses. Please send contributions to Joan Gallagher, Program Director, 100 Constitution Plaza, Suite 721, Hartford, CT 06103. Make check out to Center City Church/ Peter's Retreat with "Billy's Fund" noted in the memo section. ♦

State Capitol & Legislative Office Building Guide Available

This handy guide provides tips for advocates trying to navigate the political arena. You'll find information on the General Assembly, how to contact elected officials, a helpful glossary of terms and more. The guide was produced by the Institute for the Advancement of Political Social Work Practice at UConn. For a copy: 860-570-9262 or email iapswp@uconnvm.uconn.edu. ♦

Advocacy Unlimited's 4th Annual Conference

Ways to Wellness: Alternative and Complimentary Treatments, September 19. Focus of the conference will be on treatments for mental health. Panel and workshop topics include: nutrition, massage, hypnosis, art therapy, acupuncture and more. The conference is free, but registration is required. Call 1-800-573-6929 or 860-667-0460, or on the web: www.mindlink.org. ♦

Disabilities & Work: Q & A

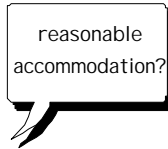
(continued from page 1)

Q. What do I need to tell my employer about my disability?

A. You are **not required** to tell your employer about your disability. However, there are times when you might **want** to tell your employer.

Q. What is a reasonable accommodation?

A. A reasonable accommodation is when a change is made so that the employee can do the job. Examples of reasonable accommodation include: changing work schedules, providing special equipment (such as a ramp or special chair), changing policies, or providing readers or interpreters. As a last resort, if you can no longer do the essential duties of your job (with or without an accommodation), you can ask for a change to another available position.



Q. What can I do if I've been treated unfairly because of my disability.

A. If your employer will not give you a reasonable accommodation or you believe you were treated unfairly because of your disability, immediately file complaints with these two agencies: 1) the CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (1-800-477-5737) and 2) the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1-800-669-4000). You only have 180 days from the date your employer discriminated against you to file a complaint!

Questions? Call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 . ♦

Food Stamp Guide

A free manual to the Food Stamp Program is available to social service agencies. Published by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), this guide not only breaks down the program, it also gives cites to statutes, regs, and case law. You can reach FRAC at: 202-986-2200 or www.FRAC.org. ♦

SAVE THE DATES:

End Hunger CT Meetings

End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) will celebrate its second Annual Meeting in conjunction with World Food Day Wed., October 17, 9 a.m. with a breakfast, guest speaker, and election of the Board of Directors. Call for more information.

In addition, we invite you to the following meetings which will serve as a source of communication and a way of identifying common problems as we prepare for the 2002 General Assembly.

Sept. 20, 9:30 am - Northeast area. Access Agency, 173A Mechanic St., Danielson.

Sept. 21, 9am - New London/ Norwich area. Alliance for Living, 154 Broad St., New London.

Oct. 17, 9 am - Hartford/Tolland area, combined with the Annual Meeting.

Oct. 30, 9 am - New Haven area. Casa Otonal, 135 Sylvan Ave, New Haven.

Nov. 29, 9am - Waterbury area. Family Service of Gr. Waterbury, 34 Murray St, Waterbury.

Dec. 12, noon - Bridgeport/Fairfield area. Bridgeport Social Serv., 752 East Main St.

For information, call 860-296-1127. ♦

Answers to Managed Care/HMO Questions

If you have questions about managed care, need to understand the referral or pre-authorization process, or need help with appeal/grievance procedures, the Office of Managed Care Ombudsman can help. Call 1-866-HMO-4446. ♦

Now on the Web: CABHN & LARCC

We're happy to announce the launching of our website at www.larcc.org. You'll find lots of useful information such as *CABHN Fever* newsletters, Hot Topics, Recent Publications, Legal Aid pamphlets, upcoming events and more. Please visit us and let us know what you think. You can email Lynn at lbailey@larcc.org with comments. ♦



Continuing to Look at TANF Re-Authorization

As stated in the May 2001 issue of *CABHN Fever*, the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant expires in 2002. In the next year, Congress will be debating important issues related to TANF. CABHN is interested in working with local organizations on this issue. Call Debbie at 860-278-5688x12. Listed below are other groups also focusing on the issue.

■ **Grass Roots Organizing for Welfare Leadership** (GROWL) is a national movement of welfare rights and economic justice organizations which is challenging welfare reform from a grassroots perspective. *Contact:* www.ctwo.org/growl or Center for Third World Organizing, 1218 E. 21st St., Oakland, CA 94606. 510-533-7583.

■ **Welfare Made A Difference Campaign** (WMAD) is a coalition highlighting the "hidden stories" about the importance of welfare as a lifeline and to challenge welfare misconceptions. *Contact:* WMAD, Liz Accles, 39 Broadway, 10th Fl. B, c/o Community Food Resource Center, New York, NY 10006, 212-894-8082 or wmadcampaign@yahoo.com

■ **RESULTS** is a nonprofit, grassroots citizens' lobby working to create the political will to end hunger and the worst aspects of poverty. Groups meet in Middletown and New Haven. *Contact:* groups@resultsusa.org or call the (202) 783-7100 or dodson@action.org, Results, 440 First St. NW, Suite 450, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 783-7100.

■ **National Campaign for Jobs & Income Supports** seeks to craft and implement a national campaign for jobs, income and economic justice. *Contact:* NCJIS, 1000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20007.

■ **LINC/Low Income Networking and Communications Project** is a source of information for and about groups organizing to confront problems and concerns with TANF Re-authorization. *Contact:* LINC Project, Welfare Law Center, 275 Seventh Ave., Suite 1205, New York, NY 1000, 212-633-6967. ❖

A Chance to Improve Food Stamps: Calls & Letters Needed!

For the first time in 25 years, the Food Stamp Program (FSP) is to be reauthorized by October, 2002. However, the House Agriculture Committee put the Farm Bill on a fast track and marked up a Farm Bill in July that allocated only \$3.25 billion out of \$70 billion in new agriculture funds to FSP, not enough funding to carry out improvements proposed by the bill. The Senate will be taking up their farm bill package after the August recess. Senators Dodd and Lieberman need to hear from us that the Food Stamp Program must be strengthened with more program funding, food stamps for legal immigrants, and policy improvements.

Contact Sen. Dodd & Lieberman-- tell them these improvements are needed:

- FSP must remain an entitlement program open to all who meet the eligibility requirements including legal immigrants, and single adults;
- Work requirements already present in TANF should be eliminated for FSP;
- Allow families to own one car;
- Eliminate the cap on shelter deduction;
- Increase \$10 benefit minimum to at least \$40;
- Revise the "thrifty food plan", allowing for benefit levels that will feed families;
- Increase earned income disregard to promote work and self-sufficiency;
- Shorten and simplify application;
- Simplify client reporting of earnings and require it semi-annually. No other federal nutrition program requires as much documentation and reporting;
- Revise punitive aspects of quality control so as to encourage states to improve administration and remove barriers.
- Fund outreach campaigns.



For more information, call End Hunger Connecticut! at 860-296-1127. ❖

Group Seeks to Keep CT Farms Going

Connecticut's farmers play a very important role in feeding many urban dwellers through Farmer's Markets as well as generously giving to emergency food sites. The



Working Lands Alliance, a broad-based coalition has joined together to pursue funding for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) of Connecticut's farms to ensure that CTs farmlands remain undeveloped and are continued to be used for farming. The Bonding Authorization Package voted out during the Special Session included language to increase PDR funding by \$4 million, with no more than \$2 million for FY 01-02. This money will be used quickly as there is a list of farms ready to take advantage of the PDR. The WLA looks to increase bonding next year. *Information:* Inolan@endhungerct.org or info@workinglandsalliance.org. ❖

CT Housing Coalition Schedules Conference

Mark your calendar for October 25 so you won't miss CT's largest gathering of affordable housing practitioners and activists-- the "can't miss it" event of the year in our field. *Information:* 860-563-2943 or [email info@ct-housing.org](mailto:info@ct-housing.org). ❖

Women's Entrepreneurs' Day

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from women business owners as they share their wisdom. At this 3rd annual conference, you'll participate in discussions, meet with state policy leaders to discuss business issues and visit the Opportunity Center for resources to start or strengthen your business.

Sponsored by the Women's Economic Development Initiative, a project of the CT Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. *Details:* Sept 17, CT State Capitol, 8 - 4pm. Fee: \$25 includes lunch & materials. Call 860-240-8300 or email sarah.grabill@po.state.ct.us. ❖



Vehicle Allowance Has Not Changed

The change in the Food Stamp Program vehicle allowance scheduled to take place in Connecticut on August 1, 2001, has been delayed. The change would have raised the allowed value of a car from \$4,650 to \$9,500. DSS was unable to make this change on its computer system. It is not known when the computer system will be updated. In the meantime, the problem will continue to deprive many people of nutritional benefits for which they are income eligible solely because they own a car worth more than \$4,650. End Hunger Connecticut! will maintain communication with DSS as it works to correct this situation. For more information, call EHC! at 860-296-1127.

Advocate Will Be Missed

A fierce advocate for social justice was lost on June 7, 2001 when Lucretia Peteros died after a fight with cancer. Ms. Peteros, a paralegal, came to Neighborhood Legal Services in Hartford ten years ago then worked for the last five years on the hotline at Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut.

Known for her stubbornness, wit and compassion, she will be missed also for her generosity as a teacher. A student of arcane sections of state regulations, she shared what she learned to the benefit of many hundreds of clients. Ms. Peteros will also be remembered for her fight against the loyalty oath required of her as a Massachusetts state employee in 1968. Her case was initially successful in U.S. District Court, then found constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. However, the oath was not administered during the case and was eventually abolished.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the CT Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs

80 Jefferson Street
Hartford, CT 06106



Next CABHN Meeting

Meetings are held the **second** Friday of the month from 10 am - 12 pm. *Please join us.*

Friday, September 14

Willimantic Housing Authority

Topics: TFA Changes & More

Directions: From Rt. 84 East, take Exit 59 (Rt. 384 East). Stay on Rt 384 for about 8 miles to Rt. 6 East (Willimantic/Prov.). Stay on Rt 6 for about 13 miles. Take Rt. 32 exit. Turn right onto Rt. 32 South. Go about 1 mile, turn left onto West Ave. (across from McDonalds). The Housing Authority is one block up at the corner of Valley & West Ave. We meet in the Community Room.

The Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN) is a statewide network of individuals, community groups and organizations which supports and promotes advocacy on low-income issues.

For more information, please call (860) 278-5688.