
AIM HIGH

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Commenting Opportunity on Healthy PA

The federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has found Pennsylvania's application for a waiver to implement the Governor's Healthy PA program to be complete. The application has been posted by HHS which begins the 30-day public comment period. The public comment period ends on April 10th. Here is some additional information:

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Southeast Region Parent Youth Professional Forum

SAVE THE DATE - Wednesday
April 9 2014, 4pm-8pm Reading
Area Community College, 10
South Second Street Reading,
PA 19603 Schmidt Training and
Technology Center, Room 120.

Please Join us for a Parent Youth
Professional Forum
The Department of Health's
Special Kids Network, in
partnership with the PA Elks
Home Service Program, will host
a free Parent Youth Professional
Forum (PYPF).

Open to everyone: It is never
too early to plan for your child's
future
**LEARNING, LIVING, WORKING
AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

Please contact Diane Perry by
Monday, April 7, 2014 *continued on page 3*
if you plan to attend. **LIVESTREAMING**
will be available, if you cannot

1. Governor Corbett sent a letter to Secretary Sebelius stating the "Encouraging Employment" provision of the waiver application is now voluntary. This is good news.
2. Based on the Governor's letter, the feds have extended the comment period until April 10, 2014.

To answer the public comment survey, please go to:

<https://public.medicaid.gov/connect.ti/public.comments/view?objectId=1852995>

HB 777 and PACE/PACENET Programs

Below is a brief summary of HB 777 and its impact on the PACE/PACENET programs. According to the Department of Aging, up to 12,000 current PACENET enrollees will now qualify for PACE and over 8,000 Pennsylvanians will now qualify for PACENET due to an amendment of the State Lottery Law. PACE and PACENET are prescription assistance programs for Pennsylvania residents age 65 or older who are not currently receiving Medicaid prescription benefits. In order to qualify for

PACE benefits a single individual must have an income of not more than \$14,500 annually or not more than \$17,700 for a married couple.

PACENET is a similar program that provides a lower level of benefits but has a slightly higher income threshold. In order to qualify for PACENET a single individual must have an income between \$14,500 and \$23,500, or \$17,700 and \$31,500 for a married couple.

On February 4, 2014 the PA Senate passed House Bill 777, which amends the State Lottery Law definition of "income" to exclude Medicare Part B premiums. The legislation was to take effect immediately. The Medicare Part B premium for 2013 was \$104.90 per month, or \$1,258.80 annually. Because this amount will no longer be considered as part of an individual's income, thousands of Pennsylvanians will now meet the income criteria to receive PACENET benefits, or will receive increased benefits by qualifying for PACE rather than PACENET.

All PACENET beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries should be made aware of this change so they can be sure they are receiving the maximum level of benefits they qualify to receive.

Tax-Free Disability Savings Account

With significant public backing and support in Congress, advocates say federal lawmakers are poised to consider a major change to the money-saving abilities of those with disabilities. Just one hurdle remains before Congress is expected to take up the Achieving a Better Life Experience, or ABLE, Act.

The bill, which has lingered since at least 2009, would establish special accounts to allow people with disabilities to save up to \$100,000 without risking their eligibility for benefits like Social Security. What's more, under the plan, individuals could retain Medicaid no matter how much is deposited.

To read more, go to:

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2014/02/21/congress-eyeing-savings/19134/>

make it in person. Please indicate to Diane if you will be attending in person or would like the instructions for watching live on your computer. Reimbursement to Families and Youth is available for travel and childcare. Light Dinner Provided.

Phone: 814-270-5618

Fax: 888-235-7245

Email:

dperry@paelkshomeservice.org

Please forward this information to others who may be interested in participating.

Pet Assistance

For Berks

and Chester Counties: Below is information about a program that helps low-income families feed their pets.

Animal House Project

2 Moon Junction Animal House

Project is a 501©3 charitable organization comprised of Animal House Project and Chester County Pet Food Pantry. Our mission is to serve families facing financial crisis in Berks, Chester and western Montgomery Counties.

<http://www.animalhouseproject.org/>

NCD Statement on "Stand Your Ground" Laws

The National Council on Disability (NCD) is an independent federal agency that advises the President, Congress, and other federal agencies on policies, programs, practices, and procedures that determine the quality of life and expanse of opportunities for Americans with disabilities, made up of a team of fifteen presidentially appointed Council members, an Executive Director appointed by the Chairman, and a dedicated professional staff.

As we convene today's meeting on Medicaid Managed Care in the great state of Florida, NCD pledges its solidarity with those facing systemic racism, civil and human rights violations and respectfully ask the state of Florida -- and over twenty other states with similar laws -- to review and/or revoke current legislation and policy applications that disproportionately harm marginalized communities.

Clearly, concerns brought to public attention by "Stand Your Ground" and similar laws extend beyond the borders of one state

and impact more than one community, often with many lines, identities and contributing factors intersecting. Increasingly, the implications of laws passed in one State reverberate in ways that cannot be known at the time they are conceived across the nation.

Since first formed in 1978 and later became independent in 1984, NCD has regularly issued reports containing findings and recommendations determined from comprehensive analyses of civil rights laws, mediation, court decisions, regulations, policy guidance, and models.

NCD policy positions are intended to promote the rights of all people to participate fully in every aspects of society, freely and without fear, and many of the disability community's most important civil rights laws are reflections of this aim, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, the Help America Vote Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Developmental Disabilities Act, the Olmstead decision, the Genetic Information

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Nondiscrimination Act, hate crimes laws, and so many others.

As we near the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and the 30th Anniversary of the National Council on Disability later this year, and while much has certainly been achieved since our inception, let us be mindful that there is still much work before us to ensure equality, safety and justice for all.

It is in this spirit that we offer this statement and urge continued careful, comprehensive and committed attention and assessment of detrimental "Stand Your Ground" and similar laws on persons with disabilities - and to all communities who are likely to find themselves unduly harmed by the long-term and largely unanticipated consequences of these laws.

Respectfully yours,

The members of the National Council on Disability

Berks County Skier in the Paralympics in Sochi

Go here to read the article:

<http://www.pottsmmerc.com/general-news/20140215/berks-county-skier-headed-to-sochi-for-paralympics#.UwThv0WMPY8.email>

GED Assistance Through Opportunity House

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET YOUR GED ?

DO YOU NEED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP PAY FOR TESTING, BOOKS, AND TRANSPORTATION?

OPPORTUNITY HOUSE HAS FUNDS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WOMEN WHO ARE WORKING ON ACHIEVING THIS GOAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL

DELIA AT 610.374.4696 EXT 230

Social Security Announces New Expedited Disability Process for Veterans

Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, along with Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD) today unveiled a new initiative to expedite disability claims by veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation rating of 100% Permanent & Total (P&T). Under the new process, Social Security will treat these veterans' applications as high priority and issue expedited decisions, similar to the way the agency currently handles disability claims from Wounded Warriors.

Bills in PA legislation related to education

The House took up a number of education reforms this week to improve accountability and transparency for Pennsylvania's schools and also to enhance education opportunities for students.

House Bill 1411, also known as SchoolWATCH, would direct the Pennsylvania Department of Education to create a searchable online database detailing the revenues and expenditures of traditional, charter and cyber school districts across the Commonwealth. The bill follows the model of PennWATCH, which was created to allow Pennsylvania residents to see how tax dollars are being used by state agencies.

House Bill 1741 would require school boards to provide at least 48 hours of public notice prior to voting upon any proposed collective bargaining agreement or employment contract.

House Bill 1738 would create a commission to study basic education funding and develop a formula that takes into account each school district's market value/personal income aid ratio, equalized millage rate, geographic price differences, enrollment levels, local support and other factors.

House Bill 1816 would allow Pennsylvania's teachers, guidance counselors and other school administrators to receive necessary continuing education credits if they visit certain manufacturing facilities. These visits would take educators to manufacturers for in-person tours and orientation programs in manufacturing facilities with the goal of ensuring students are more familiar with available opportunities in the modern high-tech manufacturing industry.

House Bill 1878 would create the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Strategy (Pa WInS) program, which would offer tax credits to businesses to organize and collaborate with each other to address common personnel needs and training shortfalls and then develop employee training programs and implement them with readily-available pre-existing infrastructure.

All of the measures now advance to the Senate for consideration.

House Approves Bill to Improve Care and Reduce Costs for Medicaid

The House unanimously voted this week on a measure to help improve patient care and reduce health care costs through the development and use of a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Advisory Council for the state's Medicaid program.

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House Bill 1655 would facilitate the use of the PCMH model by allowing a primary care physician or nurse practitioner to act as the primary point of contact for all medical care having to do with an individual patient. This model of care is especially effective for those with chronic diseases that require one or more specialists. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists and others would communicate to ensure the patient is receiving coordinated care, which includes making sure the patient does not undergo duplicative testing, receive important routine exams, and is alerted when immunizations are needed.

A total of 26 other states have already launched PCMH initiatives within their Medicaid programs on a state or regional level. Private insurers also are already using PCMH models.

Upcoming Events

Teens Taking Flight every Tuesday 5-7pm:

March 18
March 25
April 1
April 8
April 15
April 22
April 29

BCTV Disabilities: Issues & Updates 12:30pm every Third Friday of the Month:

March 21st
April 18th

Ticket to Work: Information Sessions every Third Wednesday of the month at 1pm:

March 19th
April 16th