



NEWS

from the Consumer Health Action Network

July 2007

2007 State Programs and Budget Update

Connecticut's 2007 legislative session started with high hopes for covering the uninsured in the state. So what happened? Here is some of what finally passed:

Covering the uninsured:

- Increase eligibility for HUSKY parents – if your child is in HUSKY Part A, you now qualify as well
- Increase HUSKY eligibility for pregnant women
- The state will pay HUSKY premiums for uninsured newborns for four months
- Creates a Health First Authority to draft a plan to cover every CT resident, plan to be complete by 12/1/08
- Planning for a Charter Oak Health Plan – for CT residents who have been uninsured at least six months
 - It is not clear what will be covered or how much it will cost
 - It will have \$1000 deductibles, 20% coinsurance, and a \$1 million lifetime limit on benefits
 - There will be subsidies for low income residents
 - Expect to begin offering the plan in late 2008 or 2009

Premium Assistance for HUSKY:

Created a mandatory program forcing HUSKY families at all income levels into employer-sponsored coverage when available and to give up HUSKY benefits

- Families with a worker who is offered health coverage at work will have to take it, even if it is less coverage and more expensive
- Those family members will no longer be able to get care through HUSKY
- Workers will have premiums deducted from their paychecks, the state says they will reimburse them
- No provisions to reimburse for copays, deductibles or coinsurance
- No details on how they would provide services not covered in employer plans such as prescriptions, dental, vision or mental health care

IMPORTANT – this still requires the state to get approval from the federal government for a waiver -- essentially permission to break the rules – we will let you know what happens and what you can do about it

Primary Care Case Management:

In some very good news, the legislature approved a plan to offer HUSKY consumers in two communities an opportunity to get health care without going through an HMO. This will be completely voluntary for families. We will also be sending more information on this exciting new option for families as we learn more.

Other Changes:

- Funding for Medicaid interpretation services to begin on 4/1/2009
- Increase cigarette tax by 49 cents
- Increased Medicaid payments rates to doctors, clinics and other providers

Consumer Health Action Network www.cthealthconsumer.org toll-free 1-888-873-4585

Funded by the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

If you prefer to receive this newsletter in Spanish, call us toll-free at 1-888-873-4585

YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL – COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Help is available!

Check out our tip sheets or call our helpline.

Trying to get health care in Connecticut can be frustrating. We have tip sheets to help. Visit our website at www.cthealthconsumer.org or call us at 1-888-873-4585 to receive a copy in the mail.

Available tip sheets include:

- ✓ Ways to reduce my health care bills if I don't have insurance
- ✓ Managing hospital debt.
- ✓ Negotiating bills with a doctor's office or clinic
- ✓ I'm pregnant, now what do I do?
- ✓ Help getting dental care
- ✓ How to cut my prescription drug costs?
- ✓ What's an HSA (health savings account)? Would it help me?
- ✓ What is COBRA?
- ✓ Worker's compensation
- ✓ Medical discount cards
- ✓ Help applying for HUSKY
- ✓ Limited benefit plans
- ✓ Help for caregivers
- ✓ What are Convenient Care Clinics?
- ✓ I don't qualify for Medicare or Medicaid. What are my options?
- ✓ I'm not uninsured. So it doesn't affect me, right?

All tip sheets are available in English or Spanish. Be sure to let us know which you prefer.

What is this group?

The purpose of this team is to review the hospital's financial assistance policies for free and discounted care within the community. The group includes representatives from Yale-New Haven Hospital, the New Haven board of Aldermen, Fair Haven Community Health Center, Hill Health Center, the Connecticut Center for a New Economy, the Connecticut Health Policy Project, and other community representatives.

When does this group meet?

The next meeting will take place at 4:40PM on Wednesday, August 8th 2007.

Where do they meet?

The meeting will be in the community room of the Wilson library – 303 Washington Ave. in New Haven, CT.

What can you expect?

The first hour of the meeting will involve the members of the council. However, at 5:30PM the council will address questions from the public. Questions on specific cases should be referred to:

Citizens Advisory Committee at YNH
c/o CT Health Policy Project
703 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511
or call (203) 772-2817 or toll-free (888) 873-4585



Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth

NEW AND IMPROVED – HUSKY INFOLINE 1-877-CT-HUSKY

The HUSKY Infoline at 1877-CT HUSKY (284-8759) has recently improved their services. Now with updated and accurate health care provider listings from participating health plans, they have information that can help you through all your HUSKY related issues.

Some services provided:

- ✦ Help families apply for the program over the phone
- ✦ Explain the HUSKY process
- ✦ Advocacy for consumers
- ✦ Outreach and training
- ✦ Support in scheduling appointments

Dental Health – Keeping You Healthy

Dental decay is the most widespread chronic disease in Connecticut even though most dental diseases and infections can be easily controlled with early identification and treatment. Poor dental health can lead to increased risk for other health troubles, such as:

- ❖ Heart disease, diabetes, and other complications
- ❖ Premature and low-birth weight babies
- ❖ Significant tooth decay, pain, or infection can affect eating, speaking, learning and working

Each year millions of school and work hours are lost because of dental-related illnesses nationwide. Here are a few things you can do to help take care of your teeth:

- ❖ **Drink tap water.** Tap water has fluoride, unlike most bottled waters, and naturally cleans your teeth
- ❖ **Brush your teeth at least twice a day.**
- ❖ **Quit Smoking.** Smoking not only stains your teeth, but also makes you six times more likely to develop oral cancer
- ❖ **Proper diet.** Watch sugars in your food and drinks, sugar is a major cause of cavities
- ❖ **Get enough calcium.** Calcium keeps your bones and teeth strong and healthy
- ❖ **Start flossing.** Flossing before you brush removes particles from between the teeth that brushing alone won't remove

For more information contact the Consumer Health Action Network toll-free 1-888-873-4585 or email network@cthealthpolicy.org

Smiles 2 Go!



Saint Raphael's Mobile Dental Clinic

2007 Schedule

When: June 19th – Sep. 5th

Tuesdays: The Stetson Library
200 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, CT

Wednesdays: Life Haven
455 Ferry Street
New Haven, CT

9AM – 1PM at both sites

First Come, First Served

The St. Raphael's Dental Van accepts **ONLY HUSKY Insurance Plans**. There are affordable fees for those without insurance coverage. For more info call 203.867.5437

State Office of the Health Care Advocate joins the Consumer Health Action Network In the Community!

The Consumer Health Action Network, partnering with the Office of the Health Care Advocate, will be taking a Wednesday of each month to talk with people about their health care concerns and questions.

Come out and see us.

Date	Time	Location	Address
July 18 th	6:00 PM	Main Branch, New Haven Library	133 Elm Street in New Haven
Aug 22 nd	6:00 PM	Wilson Branch, New Haven Library	303 Washington Avenue in New Haven
Sep 19 th	6:00 PM	Fair Haven Branch, New Haven Library	182 Grand Avenue in New Haven
Oct 17 th	6:00 PM	Mitchell Branch, New Haven Library	37 Harrison Street in New Haven



**Consumer
Health
Action
Network**

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 942 NEW HAVEN CT

703 Whitney Avenue • New Haven • CT • 06511