

# DHS sets out to dispel welfare myths

## Spikes seen in affluent suburbs

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GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) - Jessica McConnohie is a single mom of two who lost her job two years ago. Despite turning a temp job into a permanent one in a few months, she still needed help from the state, like money for daycare.

She'd get up at 4 a.m. to get her kids to daycare, often putting in 16-18 hour days.

On Monday, she was a speaker for a statewide campaign begun by the Michigan Department of Human Services to dispel myths about welfare.

The state said record numbers of people are now getting assistance, with the biggest percentage coming in the generally more affluent suburbs.

Between July 2008 - April 2010, the numbers increased as follows:

- Grand Rapids Medicaid- 56,782 to 75,600 (33% increase)
- Grand Rapids Food Help- 54,802 to 65,304 (19% increase)
- Grandville Medicaid-1,974 to 2,813 (43% increase)
- Grandville Food Help- 1,392 to 2,104 (51% increase)
- Rockford Medicaid - 1,992 to 2,924 (47% increase)
- Rockford Food Help - 1,434 to 2,177 (52% increase)

A smaller percentage increase was seen in Grand Rapids, but the numbers are much larger - from 55,000 recipients to more than 65,000.

"I had to set a good example for my kids," she said. "I want my kids to know that you have to try. You can't just go out and do things they know they shouldn't be doing. Just to make a quick buck. You have to follow the system and that's what it's there for."

McConnohie still gets food stamps, but is working toward getting off those after a recent promotion at work.

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