

MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909-7979

DATE: November 2005
TO: Families of Children with Special Needs
FROM: Mary Marin, Executive Director, Parent Participation Program (PPP)
Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) Division
SUBJECT: Heart-to-Heart Information Updates

Michigan will have a **Family-to-Family Health Information and Education Center** thanks to a \$165,000 grant from the federal *Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*. The center will improve access to quality care and supports for children with special needs in their communities by empowering families. Through 2008, PPP is the coordinating partner among a host of family, community, state and national entities. Jointly, we will enhance our existing network resources and expand our collaborative efforts for outreach, training and parent-to-parent support. Our partners are the *Association for Children's Mental Health, Citizens to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE), the Early On Training and Technical Assistance System, Henry Ford Health System, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, Michigan 211, New Center Community Mental Health and Spectrum Health System*.

We also are pleased that our two November special events are filled to capacity. First, 80 professionals and parents are signed up for *Sibshop training* on Nov. 4. Secondly, at *Relatively Speaking* from Nov. 4 - 6, more than 50 families will learn about the special concerns of siblings of children with special needs.

Regretfully, we said goodbyes to CSHCS Family Phone Line Operator Nelinda Treviño because of funding shortfall. She was part of PPP for seven years, including translating calls from Spanish-speaking families. We now rely on *Language Line* to handle all over-the-phone translation.♥

CSHCS Update

The Children with Special Needs (CSN) Fund continues to fund van lifts, ramps for homes, electrical service upgrades and air conditioners. Recreation equipment and camp scholarships are not being funded this budget year, which ends in September.

"We have to cut back because the fund's investments earned less interest," said Lisa Splawn, CSN Fund executive director. *"With less dollars available, we made the difficult decision to not accept requests for tricycles or other adaptive recreational equipment. Also, we will not sponsor camp scholarships."*

The decisions are in effect for the fiscal year through September 2006. Each year, the CSN Fund Advisory Committee looks at fund assets to decide what to cover in the future.

There is also another change. The CSN Fund now considers family income when making funding decisions.

"While the cuts are significant and challenging, it is important to remember that Michigan is the only state in the nation with help such as ours," noted Splawn. *"We are grateful to remain able to fund some items."*

The new application packet is available from any local CSHCS office. Help in filling out the new application also is available. To make a free call to any CSHCS office or the CSN Fund, families may dial 1-800-359-3722.♥

Teens and young adults up to age 21 who have a disability are sought for a new **CSHCS Youth Advisory Council**. Members will advise the program on all aspects, including transition to adult care, general CSHCS policy, and many other activities. For details or an application, youth may call 1-800-359-3722.♥

Dental benefits are now available for adults age 21 and older in CSHCS. Dental care may include cleanings, fillings and dentures. What CSHCS covers depends on each client's medical condition. The dentist must participate in CSHCS or Medicaid.

A letter detailing benefit rules was mailed to adult CSHCS clients in October. Questions? Phone 1-800-359-3722. ♥

Financially strapped families may be able to get CSHCS payment of the private health insurance premiums for their child with special needs. The insurance can be an employee group plan or a policy an individual purchased.

"In the case of a lay-off, for example, we can pay part of the COBRA premium required for the former employee to keep his or her health insurance," explained Amy Chapko, CSHCS insurance specialist. *"Most of the premiums we currently pay involve COBRA. However, not all companies are good at informing employees of their COBRA rights. CSHCS can help families work through their system."*

COBRA stands for *Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985*. It requires most employers to offer temporary group health care coverage to certain terminated employees.

Families can apply for insurance premium payment in any local CSHCS office. ♥

Events

The **Health Care Listening Tour** includes **Iron Mountain** on **Nov. 2** and **Allendale** (near Grand Rapids) on **Nov. 14**. Citizens can voice concerns about the uninsured to *Michigan Department of Community Health* officials. Read the flier at www.michigan.gov/Tdocuments/town_hall_flyer_v2_137257_7. ♥

The **Big Birthday Party** for children with and without disabilities takes place **Nov. 12** in **Sault Ste. Marie**. To register in advance, as required, phone *Family Support Network of Michigan* Coordinator Randy Krause at 1-800-359-3722. ♥

Resources

A **St. Clair County** mom is ready to donate a **Vale 5000 containment bed** to a fellow family of a child with special needs. CSHCS Nurse Karen VanDale notes that this type of bed is helpful to children with epilepsy and others who need confinement. Contact: Krys Hartman, (810) 327-6821. ♥

The new **MI Special Health Kids "e-list"** offers family information and mutual support to families of children with special needs, including ones technology dependent, medically complex or fragile. Click to <http://groups.yahoo.com>. ♥

Dose of Humor

From the Michigan United Conservation Clubs' Tracks magazine

Q. Why do seagulls live near the sea? (Answer follows box)

The Parent Participation Program (PPP) is a section of the Children's Special Health Care Services Division (CSHCS) of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

CSHCS is part of MDCH's Bureau of Children and Family Programs. CSHCS primarily provides medical specialty care to children with a qualifying diagnosis. PPP serves families of all children with special needs. The Family Support Network of Michigan (FSN) is PPP's parent-to-parent support arm.

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CSHCS Family Phone Line
1-800-359-3722
8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday – Friday

CSHCS and this Update online
www.michigan.gov/cshcs

Free online course on CSHCS
www.training.mihealth.org

Events and Resources are compiled by PPP from a variety of sources. A listing does not denote endorsement.

If you receive multiple copies of this memo by mail, please let us know. To add your name to our postal mailing list or to remove it, *families* may call our CSHCS Family Phone Line or send e-mail to ppp@michigan.gov. Others, phone (313) 456-4381 or send e-mail to ppp@michigan.gov.

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