

Spring 2008



NEW MONEY FOR KIDS NOW AVAILABLE

As a result of the new funding appropriated by the state legislature in the 2007-2009 state budget, every county in Wisconsin is now receiving significant new resources to expand services to children with long-term support needs. Each county is now required to implement all three Children's Long Term Support (CLTS) Waivers, which include children with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, and physical disabilities. The funds were allocated with the legislative expectation that waiting lists for Children's Long-Term Supports will be reduced.

Each county will receive a base allocation to serve at least three new children in the target population. Additional funding is allocated to counties based on census data of county population under age 18 years. The funding distribution also creates a statewide reserve which will be allocated to counties on a first-come, first-serve basis once counties have exhausted their initial allocation and demonstrated that at least three children who were waiting are now receiving services with the new funds. These statewide slots are available to assist counties to meet the

needs of children who have urgent needs or are in a crisis situation.

Due to the delay in passage of the biennial budget bill, a portion of the new CLTS funding will be utilized as one-time funding. This funding will be used for children on waiting lists transitioning into adult long-term supports within one year. These funds are available to counties that are coming on-line with Family Care within the 07-09 biennium. The children eligible for this funding are defined as children on the long-term care waitlist who are at least 17 years of age. These children must be expected to meet adult long-term care eligibility standards and will be expected to transition into Family Care. For counties that are not coming on-line with Family Care during this biennium, and have waiting lists for adult long term care services, they may use one time funding for youth who are CLTS eligible and at least 21 years old. The intent is to assist these individuals by providing critical supports as they age out of special education services and wait for adult service funding.

Complete information on the allocation of these funds can be found at: http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dsl_info/InfoMemos/DLTC/CY2008/index.htm

Family to Family Health Information and Education Network News

Family Voices of Wisconsin is delighted to announce that it has awarded its first "Essential Allies Award" to Senator John Lehman and Representative Kitty Rhoades in recognition of their outstanding support of children and youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs and their families. Senator Lehman and Representative Rhoades championed the initiative to reduce waiting lists for children and youth with long-term support needs. This was the first time in over a decade that children with a wide range of conditions and disabilities throughout Wisconsin received an increase in funds allocated to their long-term needs. Family Voices appreciates the legislators' sensitivity to fairness and equity in funding priorities for children, and allowing funds for them to "catch up" to spending allocated to adults with disabilities. Senator Lehman's and Representative Rhoades' unwavering advocacy for children is exceptional.



Did You Know? Now You Know!

You are an Advocate!

"I am the parent of a child with special needs." How often have you said those words? Many of us state that we may have a child with a disability or a special health care need, and not think about all that means. Of course, you are a parent to your child first and foremost. But along with that, you:

- Are your child's first and best advocate
- Have expertise about your child that no one else has
- Develop relationships with people you may never have met if not for your child
- May have to voice your opinion more often than you're comfortable with.

So, what does it really mean to advocate for your child? It often means that you may be the voice of your child; that you can speak to support what they themselves can or cannot express. When advocating for your child, you often have to work in partnership with providers who are also supporting your child. To make sure that you are both on the same page, and communicating effectively, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- You can disagree with one another without being disagreeable. As your child's advocate, you can be well informed, calm, prepared and persistent.
- Remember your goals of a conversation — stay focused on what you want your outcome to be.
- Think about where you might be willing to compromise — agreeing on part of an issue may go very far in reaching your desired outcome for your child.
- Express your feelings without blaming messages — use "I" rather than "you"
- Stay informed — read newsletters, check out websites, attend workshops, talk with other parents, participate on advisory committees.
- Find a friend to support you as you advocate for your child. Or, connect with Parent to Parent of Wisconsin, to identify a parent with a child who has a similar diagnosis or condition to your child's. (See "Web Watch" for contact information.)

WEB WATCH

For additional resources related to the articles in this newsletter, you can visit the following sites:

Family Voices of Wisconsin
www.wfv.org/fv

National Office of Family Voices
www.familyvoices.org

Parent to Parent of Wisconsin
<http://www.familyresourceconnection.org/ptpow.htm>

Council on Children with Long-Term Support Needs
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bdds/clts/council/index.htm>

Opportunities Around the State

The Children's Long Term Support Council is seeking parent and county representatives who are interested in being active participants on the Council. Meetings are held in Madison on a quarterly basis. To find out more about the Council and the schedule of 2008 meetings, visit: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bdds/clts/council/> For additional information, you can contact Katie Sepnieski at 608-267-3377 or sepnikm@dhfs.state.wi.us

The Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) at the American Family Children's Hospital in Madison is seeking new members, ideas and input to further improve care for children at the hospital. The PFAC was formed to formalize the relationship between parents

and hospital leadership, and to seek parent's consultation on an ongoing basis. To connect with the PFAC, please call 608-890-7888 or 608-890-8335.

The Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health is holding its first annual conference in Madison on June 18-20. The conference will provide a forum to share new information on promoting social-emotional development in everyday activities with infants, young children and families, as well as early intervention and treatment strategies. Learn about programs, policies, resources and community activities supporting social-emotional development. Parents and providers are welcome and scholarships are available. More info at <http://www.wiimh.org/conference.htm>

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs News



Children and Youth with
Special Health Care Needs

The Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin welcomes Diane Flanagan as the CYSHCN Oral Health Project Manager/Regional Oral Health Coordinator. Diane is a dental hygienist with extensive experience in treating and advocating for CYSHCN and their families. She will be working to develop a statewide plan to promote oral health and organize community resources to increase access to dental care for CYSHCN. Diane can be reached at 414-292-4015.

You are invited to provide input that will be utilized in planning for and writing Wisconsin's 2009 Application for Title V MCH Services Block Grant, which

includes services to CYSHCN (including the Regional Centers, Parent to Parent of Wisconsin, and Family Voices of Wisconsin.) To provide comments, please go to http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/DPH_BFCH/PublicInput.htm. Comments need to be received prior to May 30, 2008.

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau recently released its "National Survey of Children with Special Needs Chartbook 2005-207," which provides both national and state level data on children with special health care needs. (The Wisconsin page is inserted in this newsletter.) The complete chartbook can be found at <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chscn05/>

Policy Update

Badger Care Plus Now Active

Since February 1, 2008, all children in Wisconsin have been able to get the health care they need at a price their families can afford through BadgerCare Plus. BadgerCare Plus allows every Wisconsin family, regardless of income, to have access to affordable, comprehensive health care coverage for their children. In addition, BadgerCare Plus also offers coverage for more pregnant women, parents and caretaker relatives, as well as youth aging out of foster care.

BadgerCare Plus offers two levels of benefits plans — the Standard Plan (greatest benefits) is for families whose income is below 200% of the federal poverty limit and the Benchmark Plan (basic benefits) is for families whose annual income is between 200% and 300% of the federal poverty limit.

Some families who have children with chronic health care needs and expensive monthly prescriptions who

are in the Benchmark Plan have been able to move into the Standard Plan so they would have lower prescription co-pays. This change came about as a result of work by advocates in partnership with the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). If you find that your Medicaid benefits now have high co-pays, please call your Regional Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs so they can capture your concern and forward it to the Department. If needed, they can refer you to staff at DHFS who will be able to address your concern. The Regional Centers can also work with you to make sure that you have appropriate resources to support your child and his or her needs.

For families new to Medicaid, it's easy to apply for BadgerCare Plus. Simply go to www.badgercareplus.org and complete the online application for this program, as well as other health and nutrition programs. You can also call 1-800-362-3002.

CYSHCN CENTERS

Call with your
questions!

Northeastern Region

Children's Hospital of
Wisconsin- Fox Valley

1.877.568.5205

Northern Region

Marathon County Health
Department

Wausau

1.866.640.4106

Southeastern Region

Children's Hospital
Milwaukee

1.800.234.5437

Southern Region

Waisman Center
Madison

1.800.532.3321

Western Region

Chippewa County Dept
of Public Health

Chippewa Falls

1.800.400.3678

Great Lakes Inter-
Tribal Council
(GLITC)

Lac du Flambeau
1.800.472.7207



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About Family Voices of Wisconsin

Family Voices of Wisconsin is part of a national grassroots network of families and advocates who support children with disabilities and/or special health care needs. We provide information, training and support around health care and community supports to families throughout Wisconsin, including the well received "Did You Know? Now You Know! Training program. Family Voices is dedicated to strong collaborative partnerships between families and essential allies to improve the systems of supports and services for children. A core commitment of Family Voices is to involve and support parents in decision making roles that affect program design and policy recommendations on local, regional and statewide levels.

Feedback Welcome

We want to make sure that this newsletter is an effective resource for you. If you have any comments, or wish to provide news and information for us to publish, please contact Barbara at barb@fvofwi.org We look forward to your ideas and suggestions!