

Portage JFS Open Lines



Portage County Department of Job & Family Services, Anita D. Herington, Ph.D., Director

PA makes extra effort for Medicaid clients on new Medicare Part D

"We have personally contacted many of our Medicaid clients who also have Medicare although that was not a requirement, to explain the program before they experience problems", Linda Seeman, Direct Services Manager said.

Confusion nationwide over the requirements of the new Medicare Part D prescription coverage have been lessened in Portage County for those people who also have Medicaid, by the efforts of Public Assistance staff to contact many affected individuals to explain the plan.

As of Jan. 1, Medicaid recipients who also have Medicare will no longer have their prescriptions covered by Medicaid. Now they will get their prescriptions through one of the new Medicare Part D plans. If they were on Medicaid, they should have been automatically enrolled in a plan.

"Our biggest concern is to inform the Medicaid recipients with Medicare, not to pay their spend down unnecessarily because that won't be required now for them to get drug coverage under Medicare Part D", Linda Seeman, Public Assistance Direct Services Manager said.

The spend down is a dollar amount that most Medicaid recipients have to pay out of pocket for medical expenses incurred each month before they may receive a medical

card. Prior to Jan. 1, the only reason many on Medicare were also getting Medicaid was for prescriptions, she noted, so this is another confusing aspect.

"We have personally called many of our Medicaid clients who also have Medicare, although that was not a requirement, as well as speaking with them when they come to the department, to explain the new program and reach them before they experience problems," she said.

Medicaid will continue to provide coverage for medical services other than prescriptions for Medicare recipients although prescriptions will be covered by Medicare Part D. Medicaid will continue to provide prescription coverage as well as coverage for other medical services for those on Medicaid who do not qualify for Medicare.

Medicaid is a state and federal insurance program for low income persons and Medicare is a federal insurance program primarily for those 65 and older. Ohio budget officials have estimated the new federal program meant to save money will actually cost them \$56 million more in two years than previously under the

state's Medicaid program.

One of the other problems is that the seniors who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid tend to have multiple health problems and rely on many drugs, according to a Medicare report. They also might not be aware that the new benefit forces Medicaid seniors to transfer into a Medicare-approved private drug plan.

Recipients eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid who have not joined a Part D plan were randomly assigned one of the large number of plans offering various coverage. They can change their plan any month but assigned plans won't necessarily cover all of their medications or even have affordable premiums.

Anyone with questions about Medicaid is encouraged to call the Portage County Job and Family Services Public Assistance department at 330-297-3819 or 1-800-876-9544 option 1, extension 3819. For questions about Medicare, call 1-800-633-4227 or visit the website www.Medicare.gov.

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Rates paid to foster parents increased

"Portage County desires to continue to attract and maintain high quality foster parents for our children in custody," the Commissioners' resolution stated

The rates paid to Foster Parents in the county have been increased, according to a resolution passed by the Portage County Commissioners. Portage County foster parents have not had an increase in rates since 1999.

Children Services tax levies approved by the voters of Portage County provide the funds needed to support these increases without monies from the county's General Fund.

"Portage County desires to continue to attract and maintain high quality foster parents for our children in custody," the Commissioners' resolution stated.

The increases in per diem rates, monthly clothing payments, plus a new payment of \$1 per day for special transportation costs took effect in January 2006 for

foster care provided in December, 2005.

"Director Anita Herington asked for the research on increasing the rates," Kathi Guckelberger, Public Children Services Administrator explained. "Our staff did a survey of surrounding and similar size counties and we're pleased that these new rates are above average in Northeast Ohio."

The new rates for each child will be: Age 0-5: Per diem \$25, Monthly clothing \$75. Age 6-12: Per diem \$30, Monthly clothing \$80. Age 13-18: Per diem \$35, Monthly clothing \$85. This is an increase of \$5 in the per diem rate and \$10 in the monthly clothing payments. All expenses for clothing are required to be specifically itemized and supported with appropriate documentation.

The \$1 per day pay-

ment for transportation is additional this year and different than anything the agency has done before. It is meant to help with the special increased expenses foster parents have for extra transportation such as to medical appointments and visitations.

"Job and Family Services is happy to be able to provide these increases to our wonderful foster parents and to the children," Dr. Herington said.

The county is in urgent need of foster caregivers for temporary placement of children. JFS is making an appeal for additional people to become foster parents and has new training classes planned.

For more information, call Foster Parent Coordinator Teresa Adkins at 330-297-3462.

CSEA receives award and sees changes

CSEA Receives State Award

An award for having the highest percentage of improvement on collections of current child support payments was presented recently to the Portage County Child Support Enforcement Agency. The award, for counties with large caseloads, was presented by Joseph J. Pilat, Deputy Director of the Ohio Office of Child Support of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services at the annual Child Support Training Conference in Columbus.

In receiving the award, Sylvia Strasshofer, Administrator of the Portage CSEA said "Our staff has worked hard to increase payments of child support to local families. A lot of children have been positively affected".

Customer Service Moves to Riddle

All Child Support Enforcement staff, including customer service, are now located at the Riddle

Building, at 209 S. Chestnut St., across from the Courthouse.

E-Disbursement Coming to Child Support

Payment of child support is changing throughout Ohio.

E-Disbursement, receiving support payments electronically instead of through a check, will be mandatory. The client will have an option to choose direct deposit to their bank account or to have their support placed onto the e-Quick Pay Debit Card. With the debit card, money can be withdrawn from an ATM, a bank, or used anywhere Master Card is accepted.

The program, which has been advertised with a slogan, "Have you heard about the bird?" is planned to provide a faster, simpler and safer way to receive support payments. CSEA has not received a start date for Portage County yet.

Remember . . .

Report Child Abuse Or

Neglect or

Elder Abuse

at

330-296-2273

the

CARE Hot-line

Business Seminar on Labor Market information to be held

A seminar in labor market information "Navigating the World of Workforce Information" will be conducted for area businesses Thursday, March 9, at the Portage Workforce Connection, 1081 W. Main St., Ravenna from 1 to 4 p.m.

The "hands-on" internet-based workshop will be conducted by Terry Gerberry, Customer Service Representative with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The uses of labor market information and its automated systems, including the Ohio Career Information System and Economic Development and Employer Planning System will be covered as well as links to web sites with business information.

Information includes labor force estimates, employment and unemployment

rates, current estimates of employment by industry, wage rates by occupation and projections of employment by industry and occupation as well as job descriptions.

"We like to conduct these quarterly in Portage County as needs of employers change", Gerberry said. We can also set up seminars for businesses that contact us".

Participants will also be trained and registered in Ohio's labor market exchange system "SCOTI" (Sharing Career Opportunities and Training Information) and learn how to access, enter and manage job openings and searches from their own offices.

"We like to add to our value at the One Stop by giving employers more tools at their fingertips," Gerberry said.

The seminar is also open to Geauga and Ashtabula county employers as part of the GAPP (Gauga, Ashtabula, Portage Partnership

Formerly with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, before it was merged with the Department of Human Services to make up the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Gerberry is now with the ODJFS state staff working with the Portage County Job and Family Services staff at the Workforce Connection One Stop.

"We like to think of the One Stop as a mall concept where employers and employees can find many services to assist them", Becky Porcase, One Stop Manager noted.

For more information call 330-296-2843 or e-mail to gerbet@odjfs.state.oh.us.

"We like to think of the One Stop as a mall concept where employers and employees can find many services to assist them," Manager Becky Porcase noted

Waiver program provides alternative to care in institutions

"The Waiver program can be a great help but it's one that not many people are aware of", according to Susan Stark, Director of Special Services.

The Home Care Waiver Program offered by JFS provides home and community-based services as an alternative to care in an institution. This program helps those with serious disabilities and unstable medical conditions who would be eligible for Medicaid coverage in a nursing home or hospital.

Services available include: *Nursing*—such as tube feedings, medication administration and wound care, *Daily Living* provided by a home health aide, *Skilled Therapies* delivered by a licensed occupational, physical or speech and hearing thera-

pist, *Home Delivered Meals* planned by a dietitian, *Emergency Response Systems*—electronic signaling devices, *Home Modifications* to make a home accessible to a disabled person, *Supplemental Adaptive/Assistive Devices*—not otherwise covered appliances, equipment and supplies that increase functional ability, *Adult Day Health Services*—services delivered in a day-care setting as an alternative to being cared for at home during the day, *Out-of-Home Respite*—temporary placement of a waiver consumer in an institution to provide relief for the care giver, *Supplemental*

Transportation and Social Work and Nutrition counseling identified as needed by the home services facilitator.

A Home and Community Based services Waiver referral form is submitted to our Public Assistance Department to request services. A staff member from the home services facilitation agency visits the person to gather information about their needs and whether they have a skilled or intermediate level of care that will qualify them for the program. If the agency and the Bureau of Home and Community Services of ODJFS agrees, a home service facili-

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Child Health Services offers "Flight"

Child Health Services is introducing a new service for children. The FLIGHT Program is an obesity program designed for children who reside in Portage County and are between the ages of 3-18 years old, with a BMI (body mass index) in the 75 percentile or greater.

FLIGHT, which stands for "Families Learning Individualized Guidelines for Healthy Tomorrows", is a healthy living program focusing on a balance between calories consumed and activity expenditures. It is designed to recognize the individuality and uniqueness of each family and the holistic needs of the child. Every child that participates will have a complete physical exam and a cholesterol/blood sugar screening. This can be completed at Child Health Services or by the family physician.

The program will be free of charge and its length will be determined by the individual needs of the families.

"FLIGHT encourages success through motivation and positive feedback using a variety of valuable rewards and incentives," Ruth Carnes, Child Health Services Administrator said.

For further information or to register a child, please contact Child Health Services in Ravenna at 330-297-5437.

Portage County Job and Family Services

Anita D. Herington, Ph.D., Director
Portage County Administration Building
449 S. Meridian St.
Ravenna, OH 44266
Phone: 330-297-1105
Fax: 330-297-3439

Child Support Enforcement	330-297-3791
Food Stamps, Medicaid,	
Healthy Start/Healthy Families	330-297-3750
Portage Workforce Connection	330-296-2841
Child Health Services	330-297-5437
Child & Adult Protective Services	330-296-2273
Foster Care and Adoption	330-297-3462

JFS makes foster children holiday party cheery

Foster children and families enjoyed a holiday party at Twin Star Lanes sponsored by Portage Children Services.

Santa and his elves, sponsored by Land O' Lakes, delighted the children who each received a gift and treat bag. They also enjoyed bowling, pizza, cake and cookies .

Cathi Ruefner, Assessment Supervisor, and other staff members organized the party. Gifts were donated by many JFS employees and were purchased with

Donations made by businesses and the community.

"This is the third year we have sponsored the party for foster families and Twin Lanes has been very gracious providing us whatever we needed," Penny Ray, Manager of Children Services, said. "We also are very appreciative of all the donations we received which made such a wonderful event possible for the children and families we serve."

Waiver Program provides alternative to care in institutions

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erator (case manager) will be assigned.

A cost range is assigned to the client based on the dollar amount of services determined by the home services facilitator to meet their needs. They then work with everyone involved in the care to write an *All Services Plan* to authorize those who have a Medicaid provider contract to provide needed care and services to help the client locate these providers.

A Medicaid card is given to them every month entitling them to the full range of Medicaid benefits including hospitalization, physician care, prescription drugs (except if Medicare eligible), and other services. Depending on income, they may be required to make a monthly patient liability .

For information, call Public Assistance at 1-800-876-9544 or 330-297-3750.

Moving In ,Moving Up

New Hires:

Kimberly MacPhail
Amanda Hilliker

New Hires:

Christine Birkett
Rebecca Manay
Annette Walsh
Pamela Rohrbaugh
Jodie Strausser

Promotions:

Gennifer Woodworth

Promotions:

Sheila Grega
Debbie Imler
Donna Swigart

Promotions :

Ronda Burdine
Alice Moore

Transfers

Eileen Billings-IM Customer Service to IM PRC
Donna Bates-Ridenour to CSEA Customer Service
Kathy Ehasz and Linda Forshey- CSEA to IM Aide 2, IM Customer Service
Joan Bisker-CSEA to Telephone Operator IM Customer Service Unit
Judy Corley -CSEA to Clerical Specialist Social Services
Brandy Hemphill- IM Daycare to Employment Services Counselor at One Stop
Angella Vaughn-IM Worker 3 to Employment Services Counselor at One Stop

Social Services

Social Service Worker 3
Social Service Worker 3

Income Maintenance

IM Worker 3
IM Worker 3
IM Worker 3
IM Worker 3
IM Aide 2

Recovery & Investigations

Supervisor

Income Maintenance

IM Worker 3
IM Worker 3
IM Worker 3

Day Care

IM Worker 3
Soc. Service Worker 2