

Portage JFS Open Lines

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

Child Health Services and Health Dept. collaborating on immunizations

The Portage County Health Department is bringing its professional staff to Child Health Services of Portage County to provide the childhood immunization clinic starting Dec. 5.

Providing services in one convenient location will better serve the community and improve overall customer service for children and families in Portage County by both the Health Department and Child Health Services staffs.

Starting Wednesday, December 5, the Portage County Health Department will relocate the childhood immunization clinics to the Child Health Services clinic located on the 1st floor across from WIC, in the back of the Portage County Administration Building at 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna. Clients visiting the clinic should use the Chestnut Street parking entrance for Child Health Services and WIC.

“Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for children to get shots. For years our agencies have provided similar services to the same children and their families at different locations and times in the same building,” DuWayne Porter, Portage County Health Commissioner said.

Providing childhood immunizations in one location will improve the delivery of services, strengthening operations, customer service and collaborative efforts. It will also allow the two agencies to share their skilled personnel, Porter said.

“We found it very confusing for our clients in the past. We are committed to consolidating our services by collaboratively working together to get our children immunized the best way possi-

ble,” Kelly Engelhart, Director of Nursing at the Portage County Health Department explained.

“The delivery of services will remain unchanged. The difference will be the location which will be more convenient and accessible for clients,” Heather Angus, Administrator at Child Health Services of Portage County added.

The clinic will be every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to Noon. The cost will be \$10.00 per childhood immunization shot and there will be no cost for those with Medicaid coverage. Childhood and adolescent immunizations will be provided to those 21 years old and younger.

The Health Department and Child Health, (a division of Job and Family Services), have been working extensively on comparing programs and services to look for ways to end duplication and confusion among clients and improve efficiency of service delivery.

This is the only health department service that is moving. Adult immunizations will still be provided at the Health Department on the third floor of the County Administration Building.

For further information call Child Health Services at (330) 297-5437 or the Portage County Health Department at (330) 296-9919.

“The difference will be the location, which will be more convenient and accessible for clients,” Heather Angus, Administrator of Child Health Services.

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Public Assistance staff has coupon drive to help clients

Heather Kimbrough, Income Maintenance Worker 3 in Public Assistance, came up with a helpful idea for our food stamp clients—couponing. After reading about the new Northeast Ohio Couponers Club, she thought this “free money” that couponers talk about could help stretch the food stamps of many that come to JFS for assistance.

It was decided it would be a great idea to have an organized folder of coupons that staff could donate to with coupons they may not need for certain products, and put them in the waiting room for clients who could take what they needed. According to the couponers club, they tell of grocery store trips where they may walk out with a cart full of free groceries thanks to coupons and sales. While that might be a stretch, Heather and our staff hope they can make a positive difference in some clients’ budgets.

**National Adoption Month Theme:
“You Don't Have to be Perfect to be a Perfect Parent.
There are Thousands of Teens in Foster Care
Who Would Love To Put Up With You”**

In recognizing National Adoption Month in Ohio, Governor Ted Strickland noted, “The Department of Job and Family Services and other public and private child caring agencies work diligently to ensure that all Ohio's children have permanent, safe and loving homes and continue to work to increase public awareness of the importance of adoption for the permanency of Ohio’s waiting children.”

As part of the festivities for the month, Portage County Foster and Adoptive families enjoyed the 2nd Annual Adoption Celebration and a Phantoms Hockey game, at the Ice Zone in Boardman.

Portage County Children Services staff joined with Mah-

oning, Trumbull and Columbiana Counties for the event also sponsored by the Northeast Ohio Adoption Services (NOAS) and Mahoning Valley Phantoms Hockey.

NOAS also had a goal of collecting 6,000 cans of food to donate to the Second Harvest Food Bank to represent the 6,000 Ohio children waiting for a family.

As Governor Strickland also stated “We thank adoptive families who provide love, warmth and play a vital role in a child’s ability to experience stability, reach self-sufficiency and develop positive strong self-images.”

For more information about adoption and foster care, call 330-296-2273.



The crowd, including JFS staff, other agency staffs, the public and military members watched as the flags are raised by the American Legion Color Guard at the Veterans Commemoration ceremony at the Portage Workforce Connection. The event was organized by Bill Flasiq, Veteran’s Intensive Service Coordinator, and Becky Porcase, Portage Workforce Connection-One Stop Manager. Commissioner Maureen Frederick presented the Commissioners’ proclamation in honor of “Hire a Vet Month” and Treasurer Steve Shanafelt sang the National Anthem. Displays were set up by representatives of the Portage County Veterans Commission, Freedom House, the National Guard and the Portage Workforce Connection which provided information for the public. In the photo at right, Bill Flasiq presents an American flag to Dan Mounts and Sharon Oostdyk of the Sons of the American Legion, who collected worn flags to be respectfully disposed of.

Child Support Legal Seminar to be held

“Contemporary Issues in Child Support”, a seminar for legal professionals, will be presented Friday, Dec. 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Reed Memorial Library in Ravenna. Over 35 attorneys have signed up for the event organized by Kevin Gowan, Portage County Child Support Enforcement Agency Administrator.

Presentations and a panel discussion will be presented by Judge Joseph Giulitto and Chief Magistrate Richard Badger of Domestic Relations Court, Chief Magistrate James Aylward of Juvenile Court, Prosecutor Victor Viglucci, Administrator Gowan, CSEA staff attorney Roxana Lyle, CSEA Administrative Hearing Officer Cyndy Hostler and Investigator Cheyenne Carver of the Prosecutor’s Office.

Topics will include Criminal Non-Support, Changes to Medical Support, Child Support and Bankruptcy, Paternity and Guidelines Calculations in Juvenile Court, and Current Issues in Domestic Relations Court, including a medical support update. CSEA structure and overview will lead off the presentations.

CSEA Supervisors Paula Barholt, Jeff Mittiga and Lisa Fay also assisted with the planning of the seminar.

It has been approved for five Continuing Legal Education credits (CLE’s) from the Ohio Supreme Court. Cost of the seminar is \$125 which includes lunch. For more information or to register, contact Paula Barholt at 330-297-3791.

CSEA surpasses state averages in performance indicators

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)2007 is the first year that Portage County CSEA surpassed the state average in all four measured areas of federal performance indicators.

“The hard work of the staff, restructuring of the department and the addition to the staff of Administrator Kevin Gowan is really paying off,” JFS Director Anita Herington said in releasing the numbers.

Portage Workforce Connection providing new programs to businesses and staffs

As reflected in the billboard at the right, Portage Workforce Connection (PWC) is offering area businesses assistance in becoming as efficient and productive as possible with the development and training of their employees. “The goal is to have the business become as successful as possible so they can compete in the local economy as well as the global market,” Becky Porcase, PWC-One Stop Manager said.

A “Rapid Response” program is in place with PWC staff going on-site to business that are closing or moving and presenting to employees the wide variety of services and resources available at the PWC to assist in their job search.

Funding may be available to train or retrain displaced workers to assist them in becoming a more productive and marketable employee.

Medicaid expansion updated by ODJFS Director

Medicaid expansions and their effective dates for children, pregnant women and workers with disabilities have been announced by Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Helen Jones-Kelley. Although delayed from their original start dates of Jan. 1, 2008, ODJFS and the Governor’s office announced they fully expect to move forward on the latest schedule, but due to concerns about the economy and Medicaid caseload increases they “reserve the right to make adjustments on effective dates.”

1. Pregnant women expansion from 150% to 200% of the federal Poverty Level effective Jan. 31.
2. Extend Medicaid eligibility to children aging out of foster care if they don't qualify for another Medicaid program. Effective Jan. 31.
3. “Ticket to Work”, the Medicaid buy-in program for persons with disabilities. This would allow disabled, working individuals up to age 64 to purchase Medicaid coverage if they qualify. Effective April 1.
4. Children in families with income from 200 to 300% of Federal Poverty level. Effective date pending response from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.



An “On The Job Training” Program is available in hiring and training new employees. Portage Workforce Connection can assist with up to 50% of these employees wages during the training period.

Access to economic development tools and resources, business incentive programs, and labor market information is also available to businesses, as is assistance with the hiring process.



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Child Health Services staff show County Health Department staff the rooms where they will soon be holding the childhood immunizations clinic. The childhood immunizations will be conducted at the Child Health Services clinic by Health Department nurses, to have better coordination and provide service to children in one location. Pictured from left are: Sharon Waesch, Public Health Nurse with Child Health Services; Heather Angus, Child Health Services Administrator; Kelley Engelhart, County Health Department. Director of Nursing; Rosemary Ferraro and Kim Villers, both Public Health Nurses with the County Health Department.

Moving In, Moving Up

New Hires:

Sheila Uzl - Fiscal/Eligibility Specialist - Fiscal Dept.

Sonya Edwards - Fiscal Eligibility Specialist - Fiscal Dept.

Monica Braden - Social Service Worker 3 - Assessment Unit, Children Services

William Christie - Attorney - Child Support Enforcement Agency

Rebecca Howard - Income Maintenance Aide 2 - One Stop

Bonnie Hager—Income Maintenance Worker 2 - Public Assistance PRC Unit

Promotions:

Tari Addison from Administrative Assistant to Accountant - Fiscal Dept.

Transfers:

Betty Wells from Public Assistance Adult Unit to Public Assistance Intake Unit - Income Maintenance Worker 3

Jamie Pelphrey from Public Assistance Intake to Public Assistance Adult/Family - Income Maintenance Worker 3

Marilyn Bowling from Public Assistance Adult Unit to Public Assistance Reception - Income Maintenance Aide 2

Janet Kovick from MIS Unit to Public Assistance Adult Unit- Income Maintenance Aide 2

Mary Jo Wood from MIS Unit to Public Assistance Daycare - Healthy Start/Healthy Families- Income Maintenance Aide 2

*Mission Statement of Portage County
 Department of Job & Family Services:
 To provide children, adults and families an effective
 support system to assist in obtaining self-sufficiency
 and a safe, stable, healthy living environment.*

Great holiday luncheon planned by Coordination of Services Dec. 10

The fifth annual Holiday Luncheon will be held Monday Dec. 10 at the Ravenna Moose Club, Rt. 59, Ravenna from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

“It will basically be just like always - great food, lots of fun, door prizes, and entertainment”, Janet Hayes, Coordination of Services Co-Chair said.

The Chinese Auction will be available for purchase of raffle tickets on many beautiful holiday gift baskets such as a spa basket, a New Year’ Eve basket, a warm winter cozy basket and others being added daily. Door prizes will be distributed to all attending.

The event is being organized by the Coordination of Services Team with assistance from the HEROS committee. Both Coordination of Services Team and the HEROS Committee are always looking for new members. Contact Penny Ray for information about the Coordination of Services Team and Gennifer Woodworth about the HEROS Committee.

