



Moving On Up With MEPD

Spring, 2010

WELCOME TO “Moving on Up with MEPD”

MEPD (Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities) allows you to earn money for work and maintain your savings in the bank, which would normally put you over the limit to receive Medicaid. This newsletter is sent to all MEPD Medicaid members.

You get **Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD)** because you:

- Have a disability
- Are earning money from work
- Are under 65 years old

Remember, these things you need to tell your county worker:

- When you stop working
- When you earn more or less money
- When you move to a new address

WEBSITE REDESIGNED includes Twitter and a Blog!

Disability.gov

Connecting the Disability Community to Information & Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Labor has launched Disability.gov, a redesigned federal website that connects the more than 50 million Americans with disabilities to thousands of trusted resources on disability related issues, programs and services. Formerly known as DisabilityInfo.gov, the site has been

completely redesigned and updated with new social media tools. A blog and a Twitter feed encourage feedback and interaction among visitors. Disability.gov is not just for Americans with disabilities but also for parents of children with disabilities. It can also be used by employers, workforce and resource professionals, veterans, educators, caregivers and many others.

Disability.gov features comprehensive information from 22 federal agencies, as well as educational institutions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments. Topics covered on the site include: benefits; civil rights; community life; education; emergency preparedness; employment; health; housing; technology; and transportation.

Iowa Joins State Employment Leadership Network

Iowa is the 17th state to become part of the national State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). SELN is a multi-state cooperative committed to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Iowa is in the process of assessing the state's disability services system as it supports employed (or self-employed) people with disabilities. More than 400 Iowans were surveyed. Survey results will identify strengths and challenges of Iowa's system that supports working Iowans with disabilities. A SELN-facilitated onsite visit with people with disabilities, state policymakers and staff, and employment service providers will take place this spring.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE)

For People with Disabilities Who Want to Become Employed

Each month Iowa's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, with assistance from the Social Security Administration, Iowa's Work Incentive Planning & Assistance project, and Iowa's Disability Program Navigators sponsors workshops related to work and community living options for people with disabilities at different locations throughout the state.

Work Incentive Planning & Assistance staff present information about Social Security Work Incentives and other community supports available to working Iowans with disabilities. The Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE) addresses questions such as:

- Can I work and still keep my Social Security benefits?
- Can I work and still keep my healthcare benefits?
- What do I need to know about using Work Incentives that will help me be as prosperous as possible?
- What local resources exist that will help me find and keep a job?

Information is offered about Iowa's Home and Community Based Services that can assist people with disabilities with work AND community living. Iowa's new "Self-Directed" option, Community Choices Option, is also featured with information about how people with disabilities can direct their own services and supports.

In addition, information is available about public services options -- such as AmeriCorp -- that can help build work experience and skills and public housing options -- like HUD -- that can support working people with disabilities.

Participation is free and voluntary. **WISE** workshops run from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. People are invited to attend all of the workshop or part of the workshop. Mileage expenses can be reimbursed.

The following **Work Incentive Seminar Events** are scheduled for 2010:

April 8	Waterloo
May 13	Burlington
June 10	Sioux City
July 8	Centerville
August 12	Dubuque
September 9	Davenport
October 14	Iowa City
November 18	Fort Dodge
December 9	Mason City

For more information go to <http://www.ime.state.ia.us/HCBS/MemberEvents.html> or call 1-800-338-8366 or 1-888-409-0283.

Self Employment: People Who Own Themselves

This popular two-day workshop combines the principles of business ownership with information about how income generated from self-employment can impact Social Security and other public assistance benefits.

Molly Sullivan or Beth Keeton, Associates with Griffin-Hammis Associates, conducts Iowa's Self-Employment workshops. Griffin-Hammis are national experts on self-employment for people with disabilities.

Self Employment workshop participants are invited to sign up for individual brainstorming sessions with Molly Sullivan or Beth Keeton and staff from Iowa's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program. Participants receive feedback about their business start-up idea, information about the potential impact that earned income may have on their benefits, and suggestions about helpful resources.

Registration is free, although space is limited to the first 25 people who register -- so register early. Lunch is provided; mileage and personal assistance services can be reimbursed. To register, call toll-free **888-409-0283**.

The following **Self Employment** workshops are scheduled for 2010:

March 29 & 30	Des Moines
April 1 & 2	Iowa City
May 17 & 18	Sioux City
May 20 & 21	Council Bluffs
July 12 & 13	Des Moines
July 15 & 16	Waterloo
September 13 & 14	Dubuque
September 16 & 17	Davenport

For more information go to <http://www.ime.state.ia.us/HCBS/MemberEvents.html> or call 1-800-338-8366 .

Iowa's Work Incentive Planning & Assistance provides information about Social Security Work Incentives and other state and local programs that support working people with disabilities. They assist people who receive Social Security or Medicaid benefits to understand the options available to make informed choices about returning to work. For more information call toll free 877-424-9472 or 866-528-4019 or iowawpa@iwd.iowa.gov.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (YLF)

July 11-July 16, 2010

WHAT IS THE YLF?

- Five day leadership training program for 10th, 11th and 12th grade high school students with disabilities
- Model program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability and developed locally by a collaboration of state and private agencies.

WHY HAVE THE FORUM?

- Young people with disabilities have more opportunities and more challenges than at any other time in our nation's history.
- With the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), they have unprecedented opportunities to fully develop as constructive, contributing members of our society.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM?

Young People Who Have Disabilities and Who...

- Demonstrate their desire to increase their leadership potential
- Demonstrate involvement in community or extra-curricular activities
- Demonstrate the ability to interact effectively with other students
- Are representative of Iowa in terms of geographic region, gender, ethnicity and disability

OUTCOMES

Student Delegates will...

- Learn about "developing self-esteem", "choosing a career", "the history of disability as a culture", "available resources" and "assistive technology";
- Identify existing barriers to personal and professional success and develop plans to deal with those barriers;
- Be introduced to professionals with disabilities as possible mentors and role models to encourage youth to realize their ability, rights, and obligation to pursue meaningful employment and community leadership;
- Develop a "Personal Leadership Plan" which will include specific action plans for the students for their return to their communities; and
- Be empowered to reach goals and education, employment and community.

WHO: At least 30 high school students will be selected to attend through a competitive selection process

WHEN: July 11 – July 16, 2010

WHERE: Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

COST: Students/participants will not be charged to attend this forum. Funding for this project is supported by the Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Iowa Department for the Blind.

For more information, contact: *Division of Persons with Disabilities
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa
(515) 242-6172 (V/TTY) or 1-888-219-0471 (V/TTY)
(515) 242-6119 (Fax)
www.state.ia.us/dhr.pd*

YOUR MONEY MANAGEMENT

Earned Income Tax Credit is larger this year

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is calling attention to important changes this year in the Earned Income Tax Credit that will lower income taxes to many families.

IRS Commissioner Doug Schulman said the credit is one of the federal government's largest benefit programs for working families and individuals, but also one of the least understood.

"Historically, one in four eligible taxpayers fails to claim the credit," he said.

Even so, 24 million people claimed \$50 million in benefits from the credit last year, including 187,000 Iowa families, who received nearly \$350 million. An average family receives about a \$2,000 benefit from the credit, the IRS said.

In addition to boosting the credit in by several hundred dollars in some cases, the IRS also created a new category for families with three or more children. In the past, benefits had topped out at two children.

Here are the new income and benefits guidelines. To qualify for the tax credit, families (or individuals) must earn less than:

- ▶ **\$48,279** for married filing jointly (**\$43,279** for individuals) with three or more qualifying children can receive a maximum credit of **\$5,657**.
- ▶ **\$45,295** (**\$40,295** for individuals) with two qualifying children can receive a maximum credit of **\$5,028**.
- ▶ **\$40,463** (**\$35,463** for individuals) with one qualifying child can receive a maximum credit of **\$3,043**.
- ▶ **\$18,440** (**\$13,440** for individuals) with no qualifying children can receive a maximum credit of **\$457**.

The maximum amount of credit income allowed for **2009** is **\$3,100**.

Typically, the people whose incomes are so low they are not required to file a tax return. The IRS said those people can claim the credit and receive a refund..

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Lee Ann Russo
Des Moines

Maureen Schletzbaum
Indianola

Pat Steele
Des Moines

Sheila Stoeckel
Mason City

Mike Williams
Des Moines

Matt Haubrich

Department of Human Services
E-mail: mhaubri@dhs.state.ia.us

Sarah Renner

Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
srenner@dhs.state.ia.us

Jennifer Steenblock

Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
E-mail: jsteenb@dhs.state.ia.us

Jill Whitten

Department of Human Services
E-mail: jwhitte@dhs.state.ia.us

Staff

Tamara Amsbaugh
Iowa Medicaid Enterprise
E-mail: tamsbau@dhs.state.ia.us

People with disabilities, advocates, policy administrators, employers, and medical professionals working together to enhance opportunities for Iowans with disabilities to work and live as they choose.