



Moving On Up With MEPD

MEPD Advisory Committee and Staff Have Been Busy This Fall!

It has been a busy and productive fall season for the MEPD Advisory Committee and staff this fall.

Consumer workshops were held in Davenport, Osceola, and Marshalltown. These sessions covered Social Security Work Incentives and Home and Community Based Services Consumer Choices Option. Self Employment seminars were held in Carroll, Creston and Fort Dodge. This seminar is two days and provides information

and assistance for people who are interested in their own business on how to work with the Social Security work incentives and other services to make it happen. All MEPD members receive notices and invitations in the mail to these trainings when they are planned in your area. They are free and voluntary.

The MEPD Advisory Committee held a daylong orientation session on November 7th, for new and current members of the committee. We had speakers

from many of the agencies and programs we partner with in our activities. We enjoyed the day and the lunch at the DM Botanical Center and recruited a few new members to join the committee.

Last but not least, we received word of our 2008 Grant award, "Working together so all can work". You can look forward to activities promoting and supporting work for people with disabilities continuing into 2008 because of this award.

What You Need to Know About Your Medicaid

This newsletter is sent out to all MEPD Medicaid members. We call it "Moving on Up with MEPD" because it allows you to work and have earnings plus money in the bank which would otherwise put you over the limits to receive Medicaid.

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

- Have a disability,
- Are earning money, and
- Are under 65 years.

Here are some things that you need to tell your county Worker:

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

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2007 Disability Mentoring Day: Career Development for the 21st Century

Wednesday, October 17, 2007 commemorated the official kick-off for a year-round effort related to Disability Mentoring Day. Orlando, Florida was the official launch city for the national effort, in conjunction with the U.S. Business Leadership Network national conference.

National Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is designed to bring students and job seekers with disabilities into the workplace where they can learn about

various career opportunities. Through DMD, students or job seekers are paired with a career professional to learn what it means to work in that field or occupation, observe a typical workday; identify necessary skills; and learn about possible internships or employment prospects. Mentoring is invaluable and beneficial for both the mentor and student, advancing career development and personal growth.

To find out more about DMD, visit the website at: www.dmd-aapd.org

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MEPD Program Reduces Paperwork!

MEPD members have told us in our member survey and evaluation that there is too much paperwork for MEPD. WE LISTENED!

Changes have been made to reduce the amount of paperwork for MEPD members. These changes took effect beginning November 1st 2007. The chart below compares the old and the new policies for MEPD.

1. Change in the length of the premium period:

Old Policy	New Policy
The premium periods were six (6) months. There is a premium review in the sixth month.	The new premium period is twelve (12) months. The premium reviews will take place once a year at the annual review.

2. Re-opening after a late payment (when the payment of a premium is within the month after the month due):

Old Policy	New Policy
After the payment of a late premium within the month after the premium was due, the members allowed only one reopening per premium period.	There is no limit for the number of times a MEPD case may be reopened after a premium is paid within the month following the month it is due. Please remember that all other eligibility requirements must be met before a case may be reopened after a premium is paid late.

3. Premium amount updates:

Old Policy	New Policy
The premium amount table was updated effective January 1. This change affected all premium payers because premium amounts were adjusted for all MEPD premium payers. MEPD members who pay premiums were notified by Comm. 223, Notice of Premium Increase for Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD) , in the preceding November that the premiums will be increasing. Notices were issued to the premium payers in the preceding December to notify them of the new premium amounts to be paid in January. The December MEPD Billing Statements showed the new, higher premium for January.	The premium table will be updated effective April 1. There will not be a need for the Comm. 223 to be issued in November each year, as MEPD members will only be evaluated for premium change at the time of annual review. Premiums may still be decreased any time less income is reported.

4. Federal poverty level updates:

Old Policy	New Policy
The federal poverty levels (FPLs) were annually updated effective March 1 for the MEPD group. All premium amounts were evaluated to see if the premiums should be changed due to the new FPLs.	The federal poverty levels will be adjusted at the same time the premium amounts are adjusted on April 1.

5. Individual premium amount changes:

Old Policy	New Policy
The premium amount could change several times a year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, when the application was approved. • Second, on January 1 when the premium amounts table updated. • Third, when the federal poverty levels updated effective March 1. 	The premium amount will be assigned for the twelve-month period. There will not be mass premium adjustments when the premium table is changed nor when the federal poverty levels are changed. Premiums will only change at annual review or to go down with a report of lower income.

Food Assistance Makes Iowa Stronger

Food Assistance is the name for Iowa's Food Stamp Program. You can get Food Assistance while you are working, as long as your countable income is below the limit for your household size.

Households with a disabled member must only meet the net income guidelines. Net income means gross income after deductions and is determined by adding together all income from all sources, including work and social security. From that total, a share of expenses is deducted to determine your countable net income. Deductible expenses include 20% of earned income, child support you pay, dependent care costs, shelter and utility expenses, and medical expenses of elderly or disabled persons. The net monthly income limits change each October 1st. The current amounts are:

Household Size	Maximum Net Monthly Income	Household Size	Maximum Net Monthly Income
1	\$851	5	\$2,011
2	\$1,141	6	\$2,301
3	\$1,431	7	\$2,591
4	\$1,721	8	\$2,881

For each additional member, add \$290

The resource limit for households with a disabled person is \$3,000. Your home and the full value of at least one vehicle do not count.

Food Assistance is issued through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). You use a plastic EBT swipe card to buy food. Food Assistance can be used to buy most food products, except hot foods that are ready to eat. You can even use Food Assistance benefits to purchase vegetable seeds. Some things you **cannot** buy with Food Assistance are alcohol or tobacco products, medicine or vitamins, pet foods, and paper products.

Iowa is a nationwide leader in technology at farmers' markets. Several farmers' markets around the state have vendors that accept EBT cards so that you can purchase fresh produce. For a list of participating markets, visit the Food Assistance page of the DHS website at <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/>.

We have found that many elderly and disabled people who are eligible for Food Assistance

are not currently getting benefits. As of July 1, 2007, there were 10,473 people receiving MEPD in the state of Iowa. Of those people, only 2,907 (27.8% of the total) were getting Food Assistance.

If you are eligible, the amount of benefits you will get depends on your income and how many people are in your home. The benefits can be used as soon as they are deposited or can remain in your account for up to 12 months.

To apply for Food Assistance, you may:

- Contact your local DHS office, listed in the government section of the phone book or found online at <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/>,
- Call the Food Assistance Call Center at 1-877-YES-FOOD (1-877-937-3663), or
- Apply online at www.yesfood.iowa.gov.

Food Assistance is a program under the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food and Nutrition Service. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Polk County Program:

- **Job Skills Day**—October 4th—High school students attended conference-style training on applications, resumes, online job search, mock interviewing, workplace culture, dress for success, self-advocacy, and disclosure.
- **Disability Mentoring Day**—Wednesday, October 17th—mentees traveled to work sites for job shadowing and workplace mentoring.

• 2007 New Features:

- **Disability History and Self-Advocacy Training** by the Self-Advocacy and Leadership for Youth with Disabilities (SALYD) during Job Skills Day.
- **Virtual Career Closet**—each youth had the opportunity to select from a professional assortment of blouses, shirts, and pants while participating in Job Skills Day-Dress for Success session. Skin care and makeup were also included.

- **Soft Skills Training**—curriculum for 14-18 year olds to be rolled out in January to metro high schools. Training includes employer expectations, professionalism, ethics, communication, listening, mutual respect, teamwork, and dress for success

Programs also took place in Waterloo, Davenport, and Carroll areas.

For more information about **Disability Mentoring Day Iowa**, contact Linda Kelly at linda.kelly@iwd.iowa.gov.

New Web-Based Service for Iowa Employers Looking for Information on Employing People with Disabilities

A new website designed to provide easy access to a wide array of resources for Iowa businesses looking for an edge in the hiring and retention of qualified applicants was unveiled November 1st, 2007.

The Employers Disability Resource Network (EDRN) represents a collaboration of state, federal and private partner agencies working together to identify, develop and mobilize resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities. This collaborative

group will launch and maintain the website at www.EDRNetwork.org.

By accessing the website HR staff will be able to post job announcements, recruit qualified applicants, post questions about disability issues and request technical assistance and training.

Says Steve Wooderson, Administrator of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), *"this represents a new way of looking at how Iowa businesses can locate and attract workers,*

and how public agencies can partner with the private sector to offer programs that were not available before." Added Wooderson, *"this is a network of dedicated professionals that can provide expert labor market enhancements with regard to skills assessment and customized training, along with a labor pool of qualified workers that are employment ready in a labor market that is starved for workers."*

For more information call Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services at 515-281-4140 or email EDRN@iowa.gov.

MEPD Advisory Committee "Working together so all can work"

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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.