

October/November/December 2011

Cambios en el Programa...Changes in Public Benefit Programs

There have been some important changes in some of the public benefits programs in Wisconsin. Due to state budget deficits, there have been changes in the amount of benefits and also in the eligibility standards. This is just a brief summary of some of the changes that will affect applicants and recipients of benefits.

Food Stamps The federal government limited eligibility of permanent residents to receive food stamps over 10 years ago. Persons who had been permanent residents for less than 5 years were not eligible to receive food stamps. However, shortly after the federal government made this change, Wisconsin chose to offer food stamps to all permanent residents. The federal government allows states to do this, but the state must pay for the benefits for these permanent residents (the federal government normally pays for the food stamp program). This year, Wisconsin decided to no longer offer food stamps to persons who have been permanent residents for less than 5 years. There are exceptions for children under 18, families whose members have 40 quarters of work in the U.S., and persons who have resided in the U.S. for more than 5 year. This change will affect those people who have become permanent residents in the past 5 years.

W-2 Wisconsin's W-2 program provides various kinds of assistance for low-income families with children, including cash benefits, training, child care assistance, and transportation assistance. The state has decided to reduce the amount of cash benefits that W-2 recipients receive. Persons who have a community service job placement (that is, they have been given a job with the government and the W-2 cash benefit) will have the cash benefit reduced from \$673 per month to \$653 per month. Persons in a transitional placement (that is, placed in a job with a private employer, with the state paying part of the wage for several months) will have their cash benefit cut from \$628 per month to \$608 per month. These cuts will take effect later this year.

There will be some other changes to W-2 as well, affecting the length of time that families can receive cash benefits, allowing persons to be denied cash benefits if the Human Services staff believes that the person is able to work and has enough work experience to find a job. In these cases, the person may still be eligible for training, child care, and transportation benefits, but not for cash benefits.

Qué es SeniorCare?... What is SeniorCare?

SeniorCare is a program that provides assistance with prescription drugs for residents of Wisconsin over 65 years old who meet the eligibility requirements of the program. It is designed to assist older people with the cost of prescription medications. Interested people can fill out an application at any time. The Dept. of Health Services administers the program. The requirements are the following:

- Must be a resident of Wisconsin

- Must be 65 years old or older
- Pay \$30 annual inscription fee per person
- The assets of the applicant are not taken into account. For example bank accounts, insurance policies, property, etc.
- Your yearly income determines the level of coverage.

Besides this, participants in the program are subject to certain annual out of pocket costs according to their annual income. Coverage can vary depending according to income levels. You can look at the SeniorCare Covered Drugs fact sheet on line or call your pharmacy or the SeniorCare help line (800-657-2038) for more information.

Programa Para el Bienestar...Well Women Program

This article gives information about the Wisconsin Well Women Program which provides services for screening exams for low income women between 45 and 64 years old who have little or no insurance coverage. The program pays for mammograms, Pap tests, and some follow up treatments. The program is available in all 72 counties in Wisconsin. To apply a woman has to fill out an application with the coordinator of the WWWP program in their county. Along with the application she must provide proof of age, family income, and insurance coverage information to see if she is eligible. A woman who has been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer as a result of the screenings provided by the program may be eligible for Medicaid to cover the cost of treatment for breast or cervical cancer. The Jefferson County contact number is listed. For other counties, call the county Health Department.

Esté Listo para... Be Ready for Winter Snowstorms

This article provides a list of necessary items to have on hand in case of a blizzard or snowstorm. It also explains the difference between a weather advisory and a warning and recommends the steps to take in each of those cases. It also gives suggestions for what to do if you get stuck in your car during a snowstorm.

Medicare brinda... Medicare provides a resource on line to help consumers make better decisions about their health and healthcare costs.

This article from the Medicare/Medicaid Center explains how to use a Quality Care Finder on the Medicare web-site that offers tools to compare the quality of care and difference in costs between hospitals, nursing homes, and insurance plans in your area. The site provides tools for people to make decisions about where to get care and what insurance plans to purchase. The web-site and phone number are listed at the end of the article.

Octubre Mes de...October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence and emotional abuse are behaviors used by one person to control another person in a relationship. The couples can be married or unmarried, heterosexual, homosexual or lesbian, living together, separated or engaged.

Examples of abuse include:

- Offensive and degrading name calling
- Prohibiting someone from having contact with family and friends
- Control of all household finances
- Not letting someone work or getting them fired
- Sexual aggression
- Spying

Domestic violence is a criminal act that includes physical aggression (hitting, pushing, pulling, etc.), sexual aggression (unwelcome or forced sexual activity), and spying. Psychological and financial abuse are not criminal behaviors, but they are forms of abuse that can lead to criminal violence. The violence takes many forms and can occur frequently or only once in a while. An important step to help yourself or help someone you know to prevent this type of violence is to know the warning signs such as power and control, jealousy, threats and intimidation tactics used against a person. Anybody can be a victim. If you are being abused, REMEMBER: You are not alone, it is not your fault, there is help available. The numbers of the agencies in Dodge, Jefferson, Rock and Walworth counties that provide services to victims of domestic abuse are listed.

Deje Que WIC – Let WIC work for your family

The Women, Infants and Children Program of Wisconsin gives information about food and nutrition to help mothers and children stay healthy and strong. You and your children could be eligible for WIC if:

- You live in Wisconsin
- You are pregnant, nursing a baby or are a new mother
- Your child is less than 5 years old
- There is a nutritional need
- You meet the income requirements

For more information call any of the numbers listed.