



SCIL SPRINGFIELD CENTER FOR
Independent Living

February 2013

THE SCIL ADVOCATE

“Increasing opportunities for persons with disabilities through advocacy, services, and public education.”

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Free Emergency Preparedness Workshop at SCIL March 13

The American Red Cross is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Disability and Health Program and Centers for Independent Living throughout Illinois to provide trainings for people with disabilities on how to be better prepared for emergencies by developing an emergency plan and emergency kit.

The FREE workshop will cover why it is important to be prepared for emergencies and what a person can do to be better prepared if they are forced to stay in their home during a disaster or if they must take shelter at another location. This two-hour training will provide specific tips for people with different disabilities or needs. Materials and resources will be provided to assist the participant in creating their own emergency plan/kit to meet their individual and specific needs in a time of disaster or emergency.

This workshop is free! This workshop is free! Registration is required. Contact SCIL @

(217)523-2587 v/tty to register. If you need an interpreter, large print, or other accommodations, please make your requests 2 weeks prior to this workshop.

This project is made possible by funds received from the Illinois Department of Public Health.

*Are You Ready When
Disaster Strikes?*

Emergency Preparedness Workshop

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 13

SCIL Large

Conference Room

(downstairs)

From Circuit Breaker to Benefit Access

As many of you may know, the Illinois General Assembly voted to discontinue the *Circuit Breaker* and *Illinois Cares Rx* programs effective July 1, 2012. The Property Tax Grant that many knew as their “Circuit Breaker check” was discontinued as a part of this. The Circuit Breaker program originally had four benefits:

- Property Tax Grant
- Secretary of State License Plate Discount
- Illinois Cares Rx (prescription assistance)
- Seniors and Disabled Free Transit Ride

“The application process has been streamlined and even if you are a first-time applicant, approval usually takes less than 48 hours.”

Of these original benefits, the **License Plate Discount** and the **Free Transit Ride** remain under a new program called the *Benefit Access Program*. The application process has been streamlined and even if you are a first-time applicant, approval usually takes less than 48 hours. If you have been approved for Circuit Breaker in 2012, you may instantly be certified by the new system. If proof of disability is required, you are given the opportunity to attach a scanned copy of your documentation, similar to uploading something to a social network site.

While this is all positive, there are facts to keep in mind. First of all, there are no paper applications for the Benefit Access Program. It is all done through the Internet. Also, if you are

blind or visually impaired and use a screen reading program, you will likely find it difficult to determine what has been checked on items that require the applicant to make a selection. The Department on Aging has been notified of this issue. Listed below are the eligibility criteria and income guidelines.

To qualify as disabled, you must be at least 16 years of age and receive disability benefits from one of the following:

- Social Security Administration, or
- Veterans Administration, or
- Civil Service, or
- Railroad Retirement,

or have one of the following:

- a Class 2 disability card from the Illinois Secretary of State's office, or
- a completed Attachment A: Physician's Statement if you are not yet age 65 and do not have other proof of disability as listed above.

Your* total income in 2012 must be less than

- \$27,610 if filing an application for yourself only; or
- \$36,635 if filing an application for yourself and your spouse*, or yourself and one Qualified Additional Resident; or
- \$45,657 if filing an application for yourself, your spouse* and at least one Qualified Additional Resident, or yourself and at least two Qualified Additional Residents.

If you have access to the Internet, you can go to:

<https://idoaweb.aging.illinois.gov/baa/Welcome.aspx>

or call Dave Munroe @SCIL at 523-2587 V/TTY to schedule an appointment.

Some People with Disabilities at Higher Risk for Flu

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) is now reporting that 47 states in the country are experiencing high levels of influenza activity.

While everyone should consider getting the flu vaccine this season, there are certain high risk groups, such as children, senior citizens and some people with disabilities, who are strongly recommended to get a flu shot.

According to Flu.gov, people with disabilities who have lower mobility; can't limit contact with others, such as family members or caregivers; cannot practice preventative measures, such as hand washing; or who are unable to communicate symptoms, run a higher risk of contracting the flu virus.

Getting a flu shot is the best protection against

the illness. It is also recommended that caregivers or others who live with people with disabilities get flu shots as well. Other preventative measures include washing hands frequently; avoiding touching ears, nose or mouth; limiting close contact with sick people when possible; and practicing good health habits, such as getting enough sleep, eating well and drinking plenty of fluids. If you do get the flu, stay home for at least another 24 hours after your fever is gone

Flu symptoms include high fever (100 degrees or higher), sore throat, cough, headache or body aches, chills and fatigue. Since illness from seasonal flu lasts, on average, from one to two weeks, getting a flu shot is one of the best things you can do to keep yourself healthy this winter.

Get Your Taxes Done for FREE!

No appointments. First come—first serve.
For shorter wait times, visit in March!

Services are free to:

**Families Income LESS than \$ 50,000./year
(more than one person in home)
Individuals—Income less than \$ 25,000/year**

Center for Economic Progress CEP has free tax sites in 15 communities throughout Illinois. Each year, nearly 20,000 people file their taxes and get all the tax credits they've earned and refunds they're owed.

TAX Site in Springfield:

Family Service Center
730 E. Vine Street, 1st Floor Conference Room
Springfield, IL 62703

Open 1/24/2013—4/13/2013

Hours: T & TH—5:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Saturdays 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Find out what to bring, or to learn more:

Call 1-888-827-8511

<http://www.economicprogress.org/clients/free-tax-help>

Meet Melissa Norman

Employment Resource Specialist



Melissa Norman

Melissa Norman has begun work at the Springfield Center for Independent Living as the Employment Resource Specialist. Melissa earned her masters degree in rehabilitation counseling from California State University in 2008.

Melissa was born and raised in Springfield and has always been interested in helping individuals with disabilities reach their full potential. Her previous work experience is in employment programs as well as vocational rehabilitation and Social Security. She began as a volunteer with SCIL in the summer of 2012. Melissa has enjoyed her experiences at SCIL and is looking forward to continuing to use her skills to provide services to consumers. In her spare time, Melissa enjoys spending time with her four-legged furry son Elvis.

Bullying: How To Identify It and Stop It

From PACER Center's National Bullying Prevention Center

Defining Bullying Behavior

What is bullying? At first glance, many people might think this behavior is easy to define. Their first image of bullying might be of a physically intimidating boy beating up a smaller classmate. While that can still be considered bullying today, parents need to know that bullying behaviors can be much more complex and varied than the stereotype.

For example, harmful bullying can also occur quietly and covertly, through gossip or on the Internet, causing emotional damage.

As a starting point let's consider a few other features that have been included in definitions of bullying. Although definitions vary from source to source, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when:

- The behavior hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally.
- The targets have difficulty stopping the behavior directed at them, and struggle to defend themselves.

Many definitions include a statement about the "imbalance of power", described as when the student with the bullying behavior has more "power", either physically, socially, or emotionally, such as a higher social status, is physically larger or emotionally intimidating.

Many definitions also include:

- **The types of bullying:** The behavior can be overt, with physical behaviors, such as fighting, hitting or name calling, or it can be covert, with emotional-social interactions, such as gossiping or leaving someone out on purpose.
- **Intent of the part of the student with bullying behavior:** "It is intentional, meaning the act is done willfully, knowingly, and with deliberation to hurt or harm," but there is some controversy with this statement as some assert that not all bullying behavior is done with intent or that the individual bullying realizes that their behavior is hurting another individual.
- **Distinction about amount and duration:** Many

definitions indicate that the bullying is "repeated", but the reality is that bullying can be circumstantial or chronic. It might be the result of a single situation, such as being the new student at school, or it might be behavior that has been directed at the individual for a long period of time.

- **The implications for all students:** It is also important to note that bullying is not just about the implications for those targeted by the behaviors, but that the behavior can impact all students in the school, including those who witness the behavior and those that engage in the behavior.

Additional factors: these can include; the differentiation between bullying and harassment, enumeration of protected classes, statements around the use of technology, how the behavior impacts educational performance and the physical locations that would fall under the jurisdiction of school sanctions.

A basic guideline for your child is this: Let the child know that if the behavior [of another student] hurts or harms them, either emotionally or physically, it's bullying.

Know the Laws

Students have protection under federal laws.

Many states have laws that address bullying. The content of each law varies considerably. This interactive map from the STOP BULLYING.gov website contains information on each state's bullying and harassment laws.

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html>

Three Steps to Take If Your Child is Being Targeted by Bullying at School

It is important that parents approach this situation in a calm manner and that parents keep records of facts in the situation. It is helpful if parents and school staff work together to resolve the issue. Parents can use the following steps to resolve the issue.

I. Work With Your Child

Thank your child for telling you. Tell your child that the bullying is not his or her fault. Talk with your child about the specifics of the situation and ask:

Defining “Harassment” Including Harassment based on Disability

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have stated that bullying may also be considered harassment when it is based on a student’s race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

Harassing behaviors may include:

Unwelcome conduct such as:
Verbal abuse, such as name-calling, epithets, slurs
Graphic or written statements
Threats
Physical assault, and
Other conduct that may be physically

- Who is doing the bullying?
- What happened? Was it
 - ◊ Verbal bullying?
 - ◊ Physical bullying?
 - ◊ Cyberbullying? (Meet directly with the principal if this is the case.)
- What days and times were you bullied?
- Where did the bullying take place?

Also find out how your child responded to the bullying and if other children or adults might have observed the bullying. Does your child know the names of these people?

Keep a written record of this information.

Practice possible ways for your child to respond to bullying. PACER offers a “Student Action Plan” that walks through potential action steps.

Tell a school staff (teacher, principal, other staff).

Go to step two if needed.

II. Work With The School

Meet with your child’s teacher:

- Discuss what is happening to your child using information from Step One.
- Ask what can be done so your child feels safe at school.

Keep a written record of what happened at this meeting, including names and dates.

Make an appointment to meet with the principal to

discuss the bullying situation:

- Share information from Step One.
- Mention your work with your child regarding the situation.

Share the outcome of your meeting with the teacher.

- Mention how the situation is impacting your child
- Does not want to come to school or is fearful he or she will be hurt
- Complains of stomach aches, headaches, etc.
- Has other new behavior as a result of bullying

Ask if school has a written policy on bullying and harassment. If so, ask for a written copy.

Ask what the school can do to keep your child safe at school, on school bus, etc.

Go to step three if needed.

III. Work With District Administration

Write a letter or send an email to district superintendent requesting a meeting to discuss the situation. Include name of child, age, grade, school, your address and phone number, background information of the bullying situation and how you have tried to resolve it.

This letter should be as brief and factual as possible. Include the times you are available for this meeting. Send copies of this letter to the principal, special education director (if child is receiving special education) and chair of the school board. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.

Prepare for this meeting by organizing the information you have kept and the questions you want to ask. Remember to ask what can be done to keep your child safe in school so he/she can learn.

Decide if you want to take someone with you. Clarify their role (e.g., take notes, provide support, contribute information about your child). Be sure to keep a written record of this meeting, including who was present, what was discussed and any decisions that were made.

If after taking these three steps, the bullying issue has not been resolved, you may wish to contact a parent center or advocacy organization for assistance.

**Email is an acceptable way of contacting persons.*

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Medicaid re-determination form:

Watch for it and act fast!

Keep an eye on your mail for an envelope with a form that asks you to verify your Medicaid eligibility. You will have only TEN (10) DAYS to respond, **so act fast**.

The envelope that the redetermination letter will arrive in is a plain white envelope with a PO box as the return address. It may look like junk mail. The envelope doesn't say HFS or anything else recognizable in the return address.

HFS is changing its Medicaid card process. Instead of having a new card every month, you will get only ONE card for the whole year. So you will need to watch for this new card and keep it all year.

More details

In 2012, the Illinois Legislature passed the Save Medicaid and Resources Together (SMART) Act. One portion of this Act aimed to address the backlog of Medicaid redeterminations that has accumulated over the years. From this Act came the 'Illinois Medicaid Redetermination Project' (ILRP), more informally known as "Enhanced Eligibility Verification" (EEV). The goal of EEV is to determine the eligibility status of current Medicaid recipients and adjust or eliminate benefits accordingly. This will be the system that re-determines Medicaid eligibility annually for current and newly enrolled recipients. Circumstances under which individuals may be removed from Medicaid include death, relocation out of state, or excess income, amongst many others.

The State has contracted with MAXIMUS Health Services Inc. and developed a case review system that categorizes Medicaid cases as those most likely eligible and those potentially ineligible for medical services. To this end,

MAXIMUS has begun its operation and as early as this week will be reaching out to current Medicaid recipients who they believe are no longer eligible for Medicaid benefits.

As early as this week, these enrollees will receive a letter in the mail from the Illinois Medicaid Redetermination Project requesting they submit the appropriate eligibility verification documents.

Remember:

The envelope that the redetermination letter will arrive in is non-descript with nothing distinguishing it from junk mail. The envelope doesn't say HFS or anything else recognizable in the return address. (Advocates have made HFS aware of this issue and they have said they will be changing it.) **Current Medicaid enrollees will have only 10 business days to submit the proper eligibility verifying documents.**

Once Medicaid enrollees submit the necessary verifying information, the file will be sent back to their case manager in the local office. At this time, the case manager will have 20 days to review the information provided and make a determination of eligibility. To be clear, MAXIMUS will not make final decisions related to Medicaid eligibility, but will collect all necessary and relevant information for the Department of Human Services who will use that to make a final decision.

If Medicaid enrollees fail to provide the proper documentation after receiving a letter of notice in the mail, their file will also be sent back to a case manager and their benefits likely eliminated. Although the state has implemented a new system to re-determine Medicaid eligibility, applicants still have the right to appeal.

(continued on page 7)

Medicaid

(Continued from page 6)

As Medicaid enrollees will only have 10 business days to submit the required verifying documentation, it's extremely important that advocates and providers provide support to their participants who receive Medicaid benefits who may need to submit such additional documents. With such a short turn-around time and in order to ensure continuity of care, it's imperative that Medicaid enrollees understand what they must provide and submit that information within the allotted time frame.

A summary of the program can be found here:

illinoishealthmatters.blogspot.com/2013/01/illinois-medicaid-retermination-what-it.html

or in PDF here:

<http://illinoishealthmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/IMRF-ClientAssistanceInfo-1-16.pdf>

Contact information for the Illinois Medicaid Redetermination Project:

Illinois Medicaid Redetermination Program Hotline Information

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday, 7:00 am - 9:00 pm, Central Time

Saturday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, Central Time

Phone : 1-855-HLTHYIL

(1-855-458-4945)

TTY: 1-855-694-5458

Illinois Medicaid Redetermination

PO Box 1242

Chicago, IL 60690-9992

FAX: 1-855-394-8066

Thank you to our friends at Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois www.ccdionline.org, Access Living www.accessliving.org and Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights www.heartlandalliance.org/ for the information.



Tanner Lynn

SCIL Hosts Intern from Robert Morris University at Springfield

Tanner Lynn joined SCIL for an internship that began in January, 2013. Tanner's internship duties included cleaning up old computers, working on database issues and providing additional technical and computer-related support.

Tanner is from Oakford, Illinois and graduated from PORTA High School in Petersburg. For the past 2 and a half years he has attended Robert Morris University in Springfield. Tanner will receive his Bachelors degree in Computer Science with an emphasis in Networking and Server Management on February 12, 2013. SCIL staff have enjoyed working with Tanner and wish him much success in his future endeavors.

Save the Date

Youth Transition Workshop

March 18, 2013

Career Information System (CIS)

Presented by Lola Lucas, Research Economist with Illinois Department of Employment Security

To receive more information about this workshop, call or email Carolyn at 523-2587 v/tty or cthorne@scil.org. Watch your mail for a flyer about this workshop.



**SPRINGFIELD CENTER FOR
Independent Living**

330 S. Grand Ave West
Springfield, IL 62704
(217)523-2587 v/tty

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February 2013

**COPIES OF THE
NEWSLETTER ARE
AVAILABLE IN
BRAILLE, LARGE
PRINT AND ON
COMPUTER CD**

Monthly Support Groups

Heads Up Group

Contact Dave Munroe at SCIL:
(217)523-2587 v/tty

Paralysis Group

Contact Dave Munroe at SCIL:
(217)523-2587 v/tty

Personal Assistant Employers Group

Contact Bradley Kinney at
SCIL: (217)523-2587 v/tty

Post-Polio Group

Contact Bradley Kinney at
SCIL: (217)523-2587 v/tty

WREN (Women's Resource Empowerment Network)

Contact Susanne Cooper at
SCIL: (217)523-2587 v/tty

BEST (Becoming Empowered and Successful Teens) and Parent Transition Support Group

Contact Carolyn Thorpe at
SCIL: (217)523-2587 v/tty

Having trouble hearing on the telephone?

Illinois has a **FREE**
amplified phone
program!

Call us or stop by:

**SPRINGFIELD CENTER FOR
INDEPENDENT LIVING**
330 South Grand Avenue West
Springfield, IL 62704
217-523-2587

Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

www.itactty.org A FREE program required and governed by Illinois law.