

Spring
2011

Family Voices of Wisconsin

*The Home of Wisconsin's Family to Family Health Information and Education Network
in Partnership with the Wisconsin Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program*

State Budget Includes Reductions in Medicaid, Education & Other Programs Important to Families who Have Children with Special Needs

The state budget cycle is in full swing and **NOW** is the time to make your voice heard about changes in Medicaid and other important services and supports for children with special health care needs and disabilities. The budget proposal includes \$500 million in reductions in the Medicaid program, major cuts to education (\$800 million cut in general school aids) and a freeze on enrollment in long term care programs, including the Family Care Program and IRIS, which will have a major impact on young adults with disabilities who would otherwise transition to long term care.

It is critical that families let their Representatives know how changes included in the state budget will impact their ability to care for their children. **You can still provide comments on the budget!** Mail your comments to:

Joe Malkasian
Room 305 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI, 53702

or via email to:
BudgetComments@legis.wisconsin.gov

Examples of letters to Representatives and testimony from families who have children with special health care needs can be found on the Family Voices website (www.fvofwi.org) under "Advocacy/Public Policy," then go to "advocacy tools/resources."

What is the timeline for the budget process? On March 1, the Governor introduced his proposed 2011-2013 budget to a joint session of the legislature. The budget bills are AB-40 and SB-27. These bills (available online at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov>) were then referred to the Joint Finance Committee. The Joint Finance Committee recently completed hearings around

the state. After the Committee votes on the budget bill, it is sent to the Senate and Assembly. Once each Chamber has passed their budget bill, a Conference Committee, made up of Senators and Representatives from both parties, is convened to work out the differences between the Senate version and the Assembly version of the bill. The budget bill is then voted on, and signed by the Governor (who can make changes through a line-item veto) on or around June 30.

Where can I find easy to understand budget analysis? The budget can be difficult to understand, and advocates have been working hard to analyze provisions so that citizens are knowledgeable about what is proposed in the budget and possible implications. Here are some helpful websites to get information on the budget:

- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
www.wccf.org
- Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
www.wi-bpdd.org
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
www.disabilityrightswi.org; and, of course,
- Family Voices of Wisconsin - www.fvofwi.org

How can I keep up with what is happening at the Capitol? Join the Family Action Network!

The Family Action Network (FAN) is a listserv that connects families of children with disabilities and special health care needs to issues of interest (including state and federal budget issues). FAN is a collaborative effort of Family Voices, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Waisman Center, University Center for Developmental Disabilities, and the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.

How Do I Sign Up for the Family Action Network? Contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org, call 608-220-9598 or go to our website.





WEB WATCH

For additional resources related to the articles in this newsletter, you can visit the following sites:

Family Voices of Wisconsin
www.fvofwi.org

National Office of Family Voices
www.familyvoices.org

National Center for Medical Home Implementation
www.medicalhomeinfo.org

Sibling Support
www.siblingsupportproject.org

Did You Know? Now You Know! Eligibility for Services - Rosy vs Realistic

Many programs that can provide support for children and youth with special needs require that a *functional screen* be completed in order to determine eligibility. Some of these programs include the Family Support Program, the Children's Long Term Support Waivers and Mental Health Wraparound.

Barbara Katz, Family Voices Co-Director, advises, "*When you are filling out the functional screen, consider if you were leaving your child with a friend or family member for a whole month and you had to tell them everything you do for your child and all the things that your child needs to get through his or her day.*" This can help you have a more realistic view of the care that you provide. Sometimes

parents want to be positive and optimistic about what their child could do or might do and paint an overly rosy picture. However, this could lead to eligibility being denied for a child who truly does meet the eligibility requirements.

Example: *Rosy* - She can dress herself independently. *Realistic* - She can dress herself once a week if I set out the right clothes for her.

A case manager or service coordinator will always assist families who are applying for these programs so families are not alone when they fill out the functional screen. For more information, talk with your service coordinator.

Resources for Families and Providers

NEW RESOURCE FROM FAMILY VOICES!

Family Voices of Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program, developed a webcast for service coordination professionals based on the "Did You Know? Now You Know!" training program. This webcast can be accessed at:
www.waisman.wisc.edu/birthto3/module.php

HealthCheck Other Services and Benchmark Plan

If your child is covered under the BadgerCare Benchmark Plan they now have access to HealthCheck and Health Check Other Services (HCOS). HCOS is a Medicaid benefit that can cover medically necessary products and services (e.g., over the counter medications) not usually covered by the Medicaid card. To learn more, go the Forward Health Bulletin at www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/kw/pdf/2010-69.pdf

Webinar Series - Partnering with Patients and Families in the Medical Home

The American Academy of Pediatrics and National Center for Medical Home Implementation will be hosting webinars this spring for health care professionals on Medical Home, an approach to provide high-quality, cost effective care for all children, including children with special needs. To learn more go to: www.medicalhomeinfo.org/training/cme/.

Opportunities Around the State

YOU ARE INVITED TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE MEDICAID!

The Council for Children with Long Term Support Needs, which advises the Department of Health Services (DHS), developed a survey to hear from families who use Medicaid to support their children with disabilities and special health care needs. As you may know, DHS must identify over **\$500 million in savings** to balance Wisconsin's Medicaid budget. The Council made a commitment to DHS Secretary Dennis Smith that it would collect ideas on efficiencies and cost-savings, while improving overall consumer care, streamlining program delivery, and stabilizing the Medicaid program to ensure long-term sustainability. You are invited to complete this survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/WI-Medicaid. A summary of results will be available on the Family Voices of Wisconsin website at: www.fvofwi.org.

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs News

2011 Family Voices Training Schedule

Did You Know? Now You Know! Training

- May 2, 5:30 - 8:30 pm, Oshkosh - contact Northeast Regional Center at 1-877-568-5205 or email Kara at KVanVooran@chw.org to register.
- May 9, 5:30 - 8:30 pm, Jefferson - contact Brad at Southeast Regional Center at 414-266-3189 or bholman@chw.org to register.
- Sept. 12, 5:30 - 8:30 pm, Chippewa Falls - contact the Western Regional Center at 1-800-400-3678 or email Wynne at Wcook@co.chippewa.wi.us to register
- Sept. 22, 5:30 - 8:30 & Oct. 1, 10:00 - 1:00, Manitowoc - contact the Northeast Regional Center at 1-877-568-5205 or email Kara at KVanVooran@chw.org to register.

What's After High School - Training on Transition

- May 14, 10:00 - 2:00, Stevens Point, contact the Northern Regional Center at 1-866-640-4106 or email Julia at Julia.Stavran@co.marathon.wi.us to register.

Health Reform Update

Families USA recently released "*Worry Less, Spend Less: Out-of-Pocket Spending Caps Protect America's Families*" which examines how the Affordable Care Act will protect the insured from high medical costs through new out-of-pocket spending caps. There is a report customized for each state; the report on the impact in Wisconsin can be found by going to: <http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/health-reform/out-of-pocket-spending-caps/Wisconsin.pdf>. The report states, "these caps will protect families from catastrophic medical costs when an accident or illness strikes."

The newly redesigned national Family Voices website (www.familyvoices.org) provides timely information on health care reform and its implementation. Weekly updates include details on hearings, the multi-state lawsuit and statements from the Obama Administration.

Sibling Support - Tips for Parents to Remember

Many children in Wisconsin with disabilities have at least one typically developing sibling who will be in their lives long after parents are gone and special education services are a distant memory. Many siblings will have a relationship lasting 60 years or longer. When provided with support and information, these brothers and sisters can help their siblings with disabilities live dignified lives from childhood to their senior years. Parents have a critical role in nurturing a healthy sibling relationship.

Tip #1 for Parents: Be informed about your child's disability and open to sharing information with your typically developing children. Just like parents, children fear the unknown and often imagine things far more scary than the reality. For more ideas, lists of resources including sibling programs and camps, or just to connect with other families concerned about sibling issues, visit the Fox Valley Sibling Support Network at www.fvssn.org or call 920-968-1742.

Tip #2 for Parents: Seek ways to involve your typically developing child in experiences with other siblings who share their concerns and their joys. Create opportunities for your children to play with other children who may have siblings with disabilities or enroll in a Sibshop program. You can locate registered Sibshops in Wisconsin at www.siblingsupportproject.org

Submitted by Harriet Redman, Executive Director and Founder, Fox Valley Sibling Support Network



Children and Youth with
Special Health Care Needs

CYSHCN CENTERS

Call with your
questions!

Northeast Region

Children's Hospital of
Wisconsin - Fox Valley

1.877.568.5205

Northern Region

Marathon County Health
Department

Wausau

1.866.640.4106

Southeast Region

Children's Hospital

Milwaukee

1.800.234.5437

Southern Region

Waisman Center

Madison

1.800.532.3321

Western Region

Chippewa County Dept of
Public Health

Chippewa Falls

1.800.400.3678

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC)

Lac du Flambeau

1.800.472.7207



Family Voices of Wisconsin

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Madison, Wisconsin
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About Family Voices of Wisconsin

Family Voices of Wisconsin is the home of the Wisconsin Family to Family Health Information and Education Network. Family Voices of Wisconsin is part of a national grassroots network of families and advocates who support children with disabilities and/or special health care needs. We provide information, training and support around health care and community supports to families throughout Wisconsin, including the well received "Did You Know? Now You Know!" training program. Family Voices is dedicated to strong collaborative partnerships between families and essential allies to improve the systems of supports and services for children. A core commitment of Family Voices is to involve and support parents in decision making roles that affect program design and policy recommendations on local, regional and statewide levels.

Feedback Welcome

We want to make sure that this newsletter is an effective resource for you. If you have any comments, or wish to provide news and information for us to publish, please contact Barbara at barb@fvofwi.org. We look forward to your ideas and suggestions!

Would you prefer to have this newsletter emailed you? If so, contact the Family Voices newsletter editor at Lynn@fvofwi.org.