



Public Engagement Newsletter

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2, JUNE 30, 2014

[COVERING APRIL/MAY/JUNE]

Dear Friends –

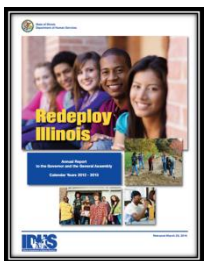
We hope you are enjoying your summer!

While the long legislative session has ended and Governor Quinn has signed the Fiscal Year 2015 budget, there is still a lot of work to do. The "flat" budget for FY 2015 includes \$3.1 billion dollars in General Revenue (GRF) funds for the Illinois Department of Human Services. A flat budget, however, does not account for increased costs of operations and programs, so in reality this means we will have to make reductions and accommodate increased costs to stay within our given appropriation.

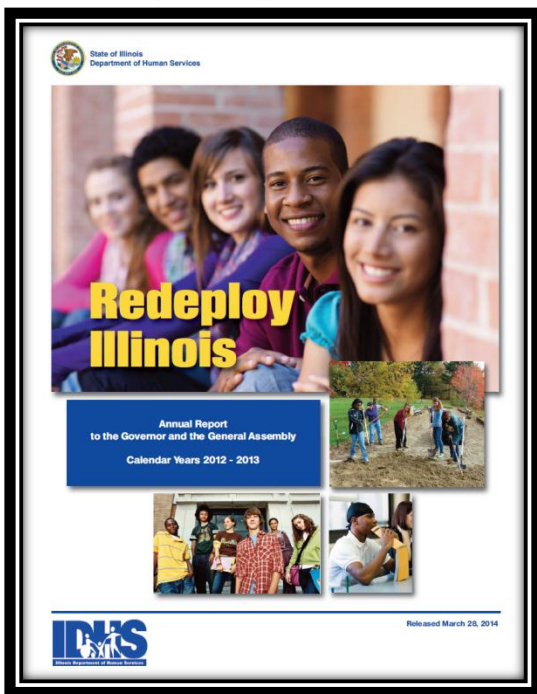
Meanwhile, we are pleased to announce that FY 2015 provider contracts are out and most have been signed and returned.

We are making progress on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) implementation with 380,000 people enrolled through the Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE), the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) and other means. We are also reducing the backlog of applications from the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM) and outstanding applications for Long Term Care coverage.

These are just a few highlights of our public engagement efforts, as you continue to read this issue, you'll learn about other activities and good news from all across the Agency. Enjoy!



New analysis of prison diversion initiative shows 54% reduction in juvenile incarceration



The state of Illinois has diverted thousands of youth from prison and onto the right path, while saving \$60 million in incarceration costs, according to the 2012-2013 Redeploy Illinois annual report recently released by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

“Redeploy Illinois' success is proof that community-based services for juvenile offenders are not only the best tools we have to truly help rehabilitate delinquent youth, but they are also more cost effective,” said IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. “This program gives youth a second chance at becoming a contributing and law-abiding citizen of their respective communities. Beyond saving dollars, the program mends lives.”

In 2013, the average per capita cost to house a youth at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) was \$111,000, while the average annual cost to serve a youth in the Redeploy Illinois program was less than \$7,000. The IDJJ data reflect 238 fewer youth were committed from Redeploy Counties in 2012. Although 2013 IDJJ data are not yet available, this trend is expected to continue as Redeploy Counties served 352 youth in 2013.

Governor Pat Quinn's FY 15 budget proposal preserves Redeploy Illinois, allowing the successful program to continue to serve at risk youth in nearly 50 counties across the state.

Redeploy Illinois was established in 2005 to provide financial support to counties in their efforts to provide community services for delinquent youth as an alternative to incarceration. Since that time, the program has cut in half the number of juveniles committed to the IDJJ, according to the program's most recent annual report.

In the first eight years of the program, participating counties sent 1,036 juveniles to the IDJJ. This is a steep decline from the projected 2,268 youth that were likely to have been sent based on the previous three-year commitment trend; it represents a 54 percent reduction in the IDJJ commitments over the life of the program. Through 2012, the Redeploy program diverted 1,232 youth saving the state a conservative \$60 million in unnecessary incarceration costs.

Redeploy Illinois supports a wide array of services to help delinquent youth, including counseling, substance abuse and mental health treatment, life skills education and parent and family support services.

The program began in 2005 in 4 sites serving 15 counties. Today it provides services in 12 sites and 43 counties. The newest Redeploy program sites include LaSalle, Kankakee, Winnebago, and Union County. Other Redeploy sites have also recently been approved to expand throughout their area, including: St Clair - adding Monroe, Randolph, Perry and Washington Counties; LaSalle has added Bureau and Grundy Counties; and Kankakee has added Iroquois County.

The program has been successful in mobilizing communities to direct resources to youth offenders who otherwise would have been incarcerated. Counties receiving Redeploy Illinois funds commit to reducing their number of commitments by 25 percent in exchange for grant funds. The complete report can be accessed by visiting: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=71105>.

North Side communities welcome expansion of IDHS services for area residents

The Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), in collaboration with Asian Human Services (AHS), the Chinese Mutual Aid Association (CMAA) and partners at the University of Illinois-Chicago Asians with Disabilities Outreach Project Think-Tank (ADOPT), recently hosted a *Welcoming Community Event and Resource Fair* at Lakeshore Medical Center, located at 4700 N. Marine Drive, Chicago. The event celebrated the arrival and opening of the newest IDHS office in the diverse north side neighborhood of Uptown.

The new IDHS Family and Community Resource Center/Division of Rehabilitation Services local office at 5050 N. Broadway will improve access to culturally competent disability and social services for immigrants and refugees, including Asians and for the broader population —disabled and non-disabled alike. The previous office located on Chicago's west side was difficult for individuals with disabilities of all ethnicities and cultures to access in search of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to obtain employment.

"Ensuring that our residents can easily access and apply for our services is paramount to the success of the department," says IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. "Residents of Chicago's north side will now be able to gain meaningful access to the state's VR system, as well as other employment-related resources and human services."

Researchers at University of Illinois-Chicago's project ADOPT believe the new location will improve accessibility and outreach to more than one underserved community.

"Immigrants and refugees with disabilities living in Chicago's north side neighborhoods will no longer have to travel outside their community to access VR services," says Jae Jin Pak, ADOPT's Community Outreach Coordinator. "Closing this gap in VR services will improve the health and economic security of all members of the disabled community."

During the resource fair, participants were able to make connections and obtain information on how to access a variety of health care, nutrition, vocational training and rehabilitation services, as well as job-search tools and other employment-related resources. Numerous private, non-profit and government agencies will distribute information about available services. The event will highlight VR and employment resources, as well as other human services that are available for all community members, with and without disabilities.

The free resource fair also featured appearances and remarks from north side community leaders, representatives of various city and state departments, and elected officials.



Illinois honors achievements in hiring and promotion of people with disabilities

In May, the State of Illinois honored the achievements of those who have done an outstanding job of providing equal opportunity and access to people with disabilities, including the Illinois Tollway and a number of other state agencies that have participated in the Successful Disability Opportunities program. The awards were presented by Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) Director Rocco J. Claps and the Illinois Department of Human Services Secretary (IDHS) Michelle R.B. Saddler at a ceremony of the state's Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED).

"People with disabilities have the same drive to achieve the American dream, to be successfully employed and fully participate in life," Governor Pat Quinn said. "Today we honor those who have helped people achieve their dreams. I'm fully committed to making Illinois the nation's leading employer of people with disabilities." The ICED's Agency of the Year award recognized the Illinois Tollway as a leader among state agencies for its approach to implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act. The Tollway fully engages in a flexible and interactive process to explore reasonable, effective and sometimes creative accommodations. The Tollway currently employs 165 people with disabilities, about 11 percent of its workforce of nearly 1,500 employees.

"The Illinois Tollway values the diversity of our workforce and we are continually striving to improve access to our employment opportunities," Executive Director Kristi Lafleur said. "While we have become more proactive when it comes to addressing the needs of people with disabilities, we always look to deepen the Illinois Tollway's talent pool by hiring the best and brightest people available."

“It is an honor to be here today to spotlight the truly exceptional performance of these organizations and individuals who have all worked so hard to create opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the workforce,” IDHR Director Claps said. “The Illinois Tollway was deservedly singled out for recognition for its outstanding affirmative action record in employing people with disabilities, including recruitment, hiring and accommodation practices.”

“We salute the Tollway and all the other honorees for their dedication to creating a workplace environment that gives every worker an opportunity to fulfill their potential,” IDHS Secretary Saddler said.

The Legislator of Year award was presented to State Representative Esther Golar for her work to expand opportunities for people with disabilities around the state.

The ICED gave Certificates of Award to the following state agencies for hiring employees through the successful Disability Opportunities Program: the Departments of Public Health, Natural Resources, Healthcare and Family Services, Revenue, Veterans Affairs, and Human Services, as well as the Gaming Board and Illinois State Police.

The ICED award for Employee of the Year went to David Dailey, a Department of Transportation employee who has devoted his professional career to expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The ICED award for a non-profit went to two organizations this year: the Cochlear Implant Awareness Foundation and the Chicago Zoological Society, which operates the Brookfield Zoo, incorporating many programs and events for guests to the zoo with disabilities.

In the media category, the ICED honored two students who directed the Willowbrook High School performance of “High School Musical” with its cast of students with disabilities.

The ICED Advocate of the Year award was awarded posthumously to Dan Dickerson, a former IDHS employee and committee member. Dan helped countless individuals with disabilities around the state by working to broaden access and opportunities for all.

The ICED represents the interests of more than 4,000 employees with disabilities in state government. The awards program promotes independence, access, and opportunities for employees with disabilities. The ceremony in Springfield also featured a presentation of a caterer who received assistance from the Division of Rehabilitation Services to open her own business, and a panel discussion about opportunities for business owners with disabilities.

For additional information on ICED, please contact Susan Allen at the Department of Human Rights, at (217) 785-5119 (V), 1-866-740-3953 (TTY), or Susan.Allen@Illinois.gov or visit www.state.il.us/iced.

New timekeeping system will safeguard against fraud



The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler announced a new timekeeping system for caregivers working under the state's Home Services Program (HSP). The new, electronic timekeeping system is designed to safeguard against fraud and ensure all services are delivered honestly and in compliance with the customer's plan of care.

“This state-of-the-art electronic timekeeping system will improve the accuracy and oversight of the program while improving the quality of care,” Secretary Saddler said. “This new system provides our staff with the ability to document home care visits electronically and actively monitor home care services in both real time and retrospectively, ultimately holding individual providers accountable. This will be the most stringent timekeeping system in the program's history.”

The IDHS has contracted with Sandata Technologies, LLC to implement an electronic visit verification system for the nearly 30,000 Individual Providers (IP) currently working under the HSP. The new, electronic system is designed to reduce erroneous billings, help safeguard against fraud, improve program oversight, and ensure the delivery of services to customers in their home. The soft launch of the system began on Jan. 1, 2014, and is expected to be fully implemented by the end of the year.

The new timekeeping system requires the IPs to “call in” upon arrival to the customer home to start work and “call out” once their work is completed. The IPs must “call in” using the customer's registered land line phone or the customer's registered cell phone.

The new timekeeping system also offers additional controls and ability to identify trends and patterns that may indicate fraudulent activities. The HSP's Fraud Unit investigates allegations of fraud within the program. Investigations focus on customer and IP eligibility issues, benefits and services. The Fraud Unit coordinates investigations with collaborative partners such as the HSP field offices, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Office of the Inspector General, Illinois State Police Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and federal law enforcement agencies as applicable.

In addition, the HSP customers and their IPs will undergo training on fraud, abuse and neglect. The department is also working with community stakeholders and the Illinois State Police in the development and implementation of a background check policy for all individuals providing services within the HSP program.

The HSP is designed to ensure that individuals with significant disabilities can live in their own homes and direct their own personal care. Individual providers provide various services to individuals with severe disabilities, such as household tasks and personal care, so they can remain in their homes and be as independent as possible. Individual providers are compensated by the state of Illinois but selected, employed and supervised by customers under the program.

IDHS announces increase in WIC benefits to purchase more fruits and vegetables

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is pleased to announce that children in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) will receive an increase in the amount allocated for fruits and vegetables. Effective June 2, 2014, children one and older will receive an additional \$2 per month - from \$6 to \$8 - to redeem for any WIC eligible fruits and vegetables.

“This increase will allow for more fruits and vegetables to be available to these children,” said IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. “Fruits and vegetables provide many nutrients that support a healthy weight and lifestyle.”

WIC is a USDA-funded public health nutrition program created to reduce the nutritional risk of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to the age of five. WIC provides food, nutrition education and access to healthcare. The program serves more than 140,000 children statewide.

The supplemental foods and nutrition education provided in WIC have assisted in reducing fetal deaths, infant mortality, low birth weight rates, iron deficiency anemia in children and increased immunization rates.

To learn more about the WIC program or to see if you may qualify, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic or contact your local WIC office.



IDHS and IDPH join forces to help control prescription drug abuse in nursing homes

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) Long Term Care (LTC) initiative, an unprecedented opportunity to change the drug prescribing culture in nursing homes. Based upon concerns regarding substantial use of behavioral health medications within the nursing home population, the IDHS and the IDPH entered into an interagency agreement to reduce the use of chemical restraints and improve the quality of care.

“The Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) is about to enter a new frontier that may drastically change the way drugs are prescribed in nursing homes,” said IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. “The Long Term Care initiative is an important step in our efforts to better monitor prescriptions for controlled substances, especially among a vulnerable population such as the aging.”

The two agencies have designed, developed, tested and implemented an electronic means of data collection and review. This has resulted in the ability to take downloads from long-term care pharmacy operations (a total of 80,000 beds) on a weekly basis and develop a data warehouse on behavioral health medications by patient, by facility, by region and statewide. The tool will allow for identification of regions and facilities where prescribing may be outside of general community standards for evidence-based clinical practice.

The goal of the IDHS/IDPH interagency agreement is to work with the long term care industry to develop reports that will assist medical directors, nursing directors, consultant pharmacists and facility directors in evaluating the care they are providing to their patients.

“The Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program can help ensure the health and safety of long-term care residents by identifying medication errors and overuse or improper use of medications,” said the IDPH Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “The IDPH is vigilant about the safety of all residents and this program is another tool in our toolbox to protect our loved ones.”

The Illinois General Assembly has also designated June Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program Month to highlight the achievements of the program.

The Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program began in 1986, and at that time monitored only Schedule II prescription drugs, including painkillers, such as morphine and hydrocodone. The PMP began collecting information electronically in 2000 and expanded to monitor Schedule III through V drugs, including Codeine, Vicodon and Valium, in 2007.

Last year, PMP collected 16 million prescription records and 22,000 doctors and pharmacists currently refer to that clinical data on a regular basis. Participating pharmacists and doctors complete about 150,000 PMP searches each month.

In 2012, the IDHS PMP joined a national data-sharing network that is providing for greater identification and prevention of prescription drug abuse. The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy’s PMP InterConnect Program allows participating states to share information on prescriptions of controlled substances. Through this network, IDHS’ PMP is better able to identify when patients have been issued duplicate prescriptions for controlled substances across state lines. The program alerts prescribers and dispensers when patients exceed recommended limits on controlled substances, which helps to prevent prescription drug abuse.

For more information about the Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program please visit www.ilpmp.org.

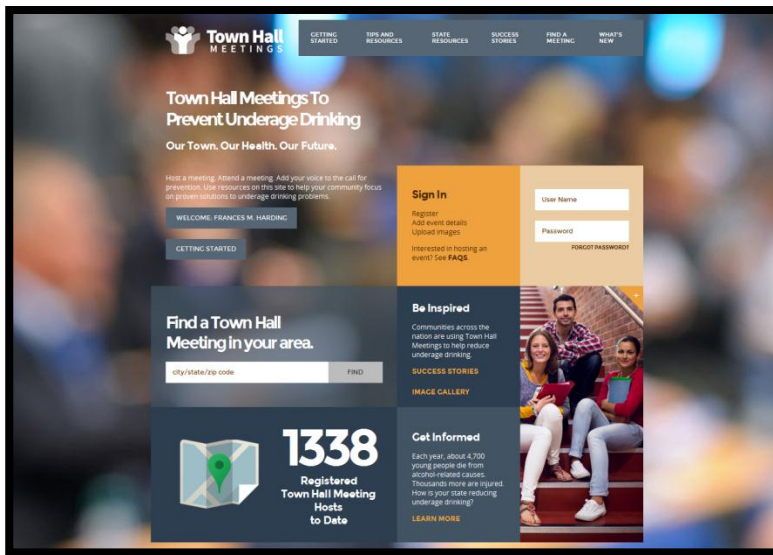
OTHER HAPPENINGS AT THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Illinois communities observe national alcohol awareness month

In honor of National Alcohol Awareness Month, 47 community organizations across Illinois hosted town hall meetings in April and May to discuss underage drinking. The town hall meetings, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), will bring together community leaders and residents to discuss the problem of underage drinking in their community and work together to find solutions.

“Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance among youth in Illinois,” said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. “Underage drinking poses a serious threat to the health and safety of teenagers across our state. The SAMHSA town hall meetings are an effective way to facilitate discussion on underage drinking issues in different communities across the state and develop prevention strategies to protect our youth.”

Now in its 28th year, National Alcohol Awareness Month takes place every April to encourage families and communities to reflect on the societal and health effects of alcohol consumption and promote drinking prevention for adolescents.



In 2012, 41 percent of high school seniors in the U.S. drank alcohol in the last month. In Illinois, this percentage was even higher, with 47 percent of seniors reporting use in the last 30 days. Drinking alcohol is particularly dangerous for teenagers because they are still learning how to make responsible decisions and alcohol impairs judgment. Teens that drink are more likely to engage in risky behaviors like unprotected sex and driving under the influence. In 2012, a quarter of 10th-12th graders in Illinois reported that they had driven a car while under the influence of alcohol.

Underage drinking is associated with an increased risk of negative outcomes like poor academic performance, violence and sexual

assault, and serious car accidents and fatalities. In 2010, underage drinking cost the state of Illinois \$2.9 billion in legal costs, medical bills, and other expenses that went towards the aftermath of adolescent alcohol use.

The theme of the 2014 meetings is "Our Town, Our Health, Our Future." For more information on Alcohol Awareness month and ways to get involved, visit <http://www.ncadd.org/index.php/programs-a-services/alcohol-awareness-month>.

Governor Quinn announces \$4.4 million for improvement projects at state facilities

Governor Pat Quinn recently announced investments of \$4.4 million to replace the roofing system at Chester Mental Health Center and to construct a cold storage building at Menard Correctional Center in Chester. Funded by his *Illinois Jobs Now!* construction program, the projects are part of Governor Quinn's commitment to creating jobs and driving Illinois' economy forward.

"The Menard project will allow more effective operations, and both projects will protect the state's investments in the Chester area," Governor Quinn said. "The projects will also employ a number of construction workers, which will drive the local economy forward."

Both projects will be managed by the Illinois Capital Development Board.

The \$1,266,950 Menard Correctional Center project involves constructing a new, 10,000 square foot pre-engineered cold storage structure adjacent to an existing warehouse. The building will house a new freezer and cooler system, with three freezer units and six cooler units, that will operate more efficiently and effectively. Ninety percent of the meat products in cold storage at Menard are produced by Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI), run by the Illinois Department of Corrections. ICI, a self-supporting entity which uses no taxpayer dollars, provides meat products to all Illinois prisons. Construction of this permanent structure will eliminate the need for temporary cold storage units. The successful bidders include general construction, Fager-McGee Commercial Construction, Inc. of Murphysboro, \$1,158,000; and electrical, M.C. Electric, Inc. of Red Bud, \$108,950. This latest efficient replacement at Menard Correctional Center (MCC) joins the more than 70% of all buildings there which are not original (1878) construction.

The roofing system at the Chester Mental Health Center, a Department of Human Services facility, will be replaced for \$3,221,339 by Joiner Sheet Metal & Roofing, Inc. of Greenville, the lowest of three bidders.

"Upgrades to the Menard Correctional Center and Chester Mental Health Center signify a willingness to invest in these two critical state facilities," State Senator David Luechtefeld (R-Okawville) said. "The new refrigeration unit and roof will better enable the staff at both facilities to manage the inmate population, shelter mental health patients and enhance our state's public safety infrastructure."

The projects are part of Governor Quinn's \$31 billion *Illinois Jobs Now!* Program, which will support more than 439,000 jobs over six years. *Illinois Jobs Now!* is the largest construction program in Illinois history, and is one of the largest construction programs in the nation.

Happy Birthday WIC

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the nation's public health nutrition program. WIC provides families with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthful choices, which they can carry with them for a lifetime.

"I applaud the WIC program in their efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and for making a true difference every day in the lives of women, infants and children in Illinois," said IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler.

WIC aims to improve the health of low-income women, infants and children by providing supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion and support, health screenings and referrals to eligible families.

Nearly 40 percent of all babies born in Illinois are WIC participants and research shows that WIC has been successful in the reduction of fetal deaths, infant mortality, low birth weight rates, iron deficiency anemia in children and increased immunization rates.

In addition, in Illinois, women who participate in the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program offered by WIC tend to have higher rates of breastfeeding initiation (81.2%) and one month duration rates (73%) than those who do not participate in the program (61.4% and 61.3%, respectively). Women who participate in WIC while pregnant also have lower Medicaid costs than those who do not participate.

As a result of these outcomes, the health of women, infants and children has been improved, infant mortality has decreased and Medicaid expenditures have been reduced. Since its beginnings, the WIC program has strived to meet the needs of its participants and has served as a long-standing and important community nutrition program which will continue to serve the needs of its population for years to come.

To learn more about the WIC program or to see if you may qualify, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic or your local WIC office.



Pictured Left to right: Stephanie Bess, WIC program; Penny Roth, Chief, Bureau of Family Nutrition; & IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler.

AutonomyWorks

AutonomyWorks was founded in 2012 with one mission: To create thousands of job opportunities for individuals with autism and other disabilities, directly and by supporting others. We do this by filling Process Execution roles such as website maintenance, data entry, quality assurance, and other tasks for companies of all sizes. Typically, these jobs require basic computer skills, attention to detail, an affinity for repetitive tasks, and a commitment to quality. Our goal is to empower our Team of exceptional Associates to provide turnkey solutions for our clients by working in their areas of excellence and expertise.

At AutonomyWorks, we believe that each Associate directly contributes to the growth and success of our company. We currently employ 15 part-time Associates who each work several 4- to 8-hour shifts weekly. Our Associates have become increasingly independent in their work, more self-confident and are extremely proud of their jobs. Their dedication, enthusiasm and pride grow daily as they master new skills and advance in their careers.

AutonomyWorks Associates are sourced through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS). The DRS has relationships with more than 30,000 individuals with disabilities that are ready to enter the world of work, and trained counselors that help to appropriately match individual skill sets with employment opportunities.

AutonomyWorks has designed a ground breaking, Multiple Paths to Employment model that allows us to effectively bring Associates on to our Team. Each month, we host monthly Job Shadow events to screen potential Associates. During the Job Shadow, potential Associates have the opportunity to interact with our current team of Associates, ask questions, and try a work sample set. Individuals demonstrating a skill set match and preference towards the tasks we complete for clients advance to the next step, an Assessment Day.

In collaboration with Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago, we have designed an Assessment Day that allows us to get a more complete view of a potential Associate's skill set and where they may best fit within our team. Assessment Day participants spend a full day at AutonomyWorks and try several different work sample tasks. After an Assessment Day, an individual may be hired on to our team directly, hired for an On-the-Job Training period, or referred to our Training Program which will be run cooperatively with DRS to provide technical skills training.

To be considered for employment with AutonomyWorks, please contact your local DRS office and let them know you feel your skills may be well matched for employment at AutonomyWorks. A qualified rehabilitation counselor will then meet with you, review your skills and help determine if a referral to AutonomyWorks will be right for you.

\$14.5 million will help meet healthcare demand in underserved communities



Governor Pat Quinn announced \$14.5 million available to build and renovate community health centers throughout Illinois. The funds, included in Governor Quinn's *Illinois Jobs Now!* construction program, will allow the state to reduce health care spending and save taxpayers money. The announcement is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to ensure all people have access to quality healthcare and improve the health and well-being of people throughout Illinois.

"An investment in community health centers is an investment in the health and wellness of the people of Illinois," Governor Quinn said. "It is also a critical and essential step in transforming our health care system."

Community health centers may apply for the funds at www.illinois.gov/cdb. A total of \$30.5 million in *Illinois Jobs Now!* funding has been distributed since 2011 to community health centers.

The Community Health Center Construction Act, signed by Governor Quinn in 2009, provides funding to repair outdated buildings, convert vacant commercial space, build new health center facilities and purchase new equipment for additional services such as OB/GYN and

dental. The funds are administered through the state's Capital Development Board. In addition to providing needed health care facilities, the grants are expected to create about 215 construction jobs.

Community health centers are not-for-profit entities created by Congress to meet the health care needs of underserved communities and high-risk patients. These centers fill a void by providing care for those whom other providers often do not serve, including the low income, uninsured or homeless; or those with HIV/AIDS, substance abuse problems or special medical needs.

May 18 – 24, 2014, designed to increase substance abuse public awareness among youth

The state of Illinois celebrated National Prevention Week from May 18-24, 2014. The purpose of National Prevention Week, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), is designed to raise awareness of alcohol and other drug use, especially among adolescents, and mobilize communities to address these issues through prevention strategies like education and enforcement.

“The use of alcohol and drugs by teenagers in Illinois is a serious threat to adolescents and families, as this behavior could have serious health, emotional and legal consequences in the short and long term,” said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. “Communities can reduce substance use rates by focusing on prevention activities in schools and other sectors, and promoting healthy behaviors.”

In Illinois, community-based organizations are working to reduce underage alcohol and drug use by delivering prevention strategies such as life skills (e.g. problem solving) education, parent education and communication campaigns. The IDHS Substance Abuse Prevention Program funds agencies across the state to deliver services to youth ages 11-20 and promote prevention in their communities. Organizations are also involved in building community coalitions to address substance abuse issues.

In 2012, 47 percent of 12th graders in Illinois drank alcohol in the past 30 days, 6 percent higher than the national average. Thirty percent of Illinois high school seniors reported drinking five or more drinks in one sitting, a practice known as binge drinking, which can lead to blackouts and alcohol poisoning. Underage drinking impairs judgment and is associated with risky behavior like driving drunk and unprotected sex.



Marijuana use among adolescents has increased nationwide and in Illinois over the last decade, as teens do not see the behavior as harmful. In Illinois, 38 percent of high school seniors have smoked marijuana in the last year, which is higher than the national average. Smoking marijuana affects a teen’s ability to make good decisions, and 1 in 6 marijuana users who start smoking marijuana in adolescence become addicted to the drug.

While alcohol use remains steady and marijuana use is increasing, tobacco use among teens in Illinois has been steadily decreasing in the past decade. According to a 2012 SAMHSA report on adolescent cigarette smoking, there has been a significant decrease in adolescent cigarette use in 41 states, including Illinois. The report indicates that this positive development is due in part to the strengthening of tobacco laws on a state level and a greater understanding of the risks associated with tobacco use.

If you have concerns or questions about alcohol or substance use, please contact the IDHS Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA) at 1-866-213-0548 or visit www.dhs.state.il.us and click on addiction.

Kudos to IDHS staff

I recently wrote to staff about “*Searching for the Light [at the End of the Tunnel]*” as we work down various backlogs in applications for SNAP and Medicaid. I’d like to acknowledge some of the current progress that has been made by our remarkable staff members:

In Terms of the Overall Application Backlog:

- Peak Number of Applications Pending – 350,000
- Current Number of Applications Pending as of June 30, 2014 – 216,000 applications pending
- # of applications that have been resolved – 718,000 applications (approximately 1 million people)
- # of people enrolled as newly-eligible Medicaid recipients – 380,000 individuals

SNAP Backlog:

- Peak SNAP application backlog – 14,000 applications
- Backlog as of May 12, 2014 – 10,500 applications
- SNAP Backlog as of July 2, 2014 – 203 applications

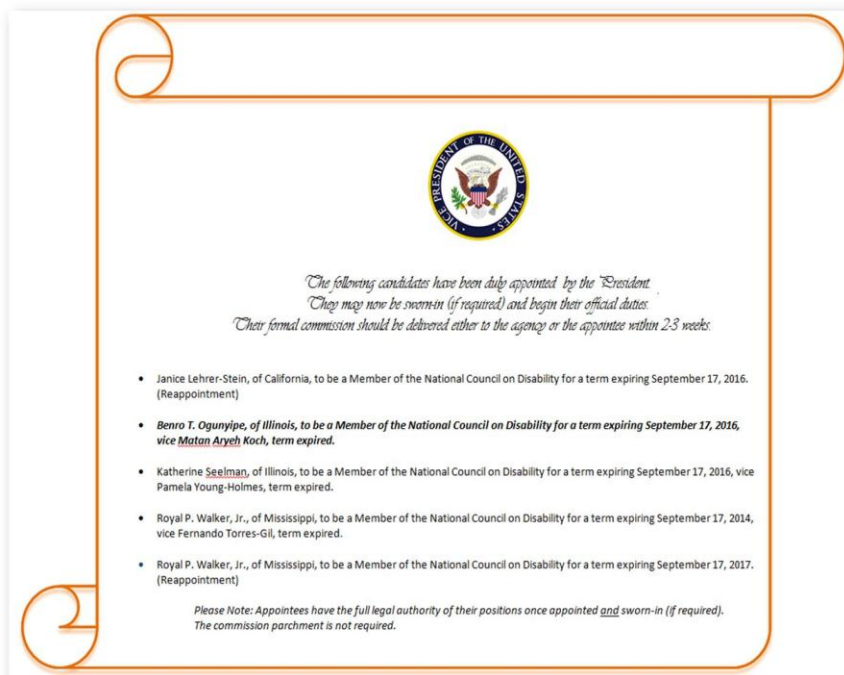


WAY TO GO TEAM!! KEEP UP THE AMAZING WORK!!!

IDHS staff appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the National Council on Disability



*On behalf of the entire IDHS Team, I am honored to announce that **Benro T. Ogunyipe** has been named by President Barack Obama to serve as a member of the National Council on Disability. The National Council on Disability (NCD) is an independent federal agency that recommends disability policy to the Administration, Congress and other federal agencies. The IDHS welcomed President Barack Obama's announcement on April 3, 2014, that included **Benro T. Ogunyipe** among NCD's newest members. **Benro T. Ogunyipe** is an Accessibility Specialist for the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), a position he has held since 2004. He also serves in various roles at the IDHS Bureau of Accessibility and Job Accommodation in Chicago, including as the Bureau's Legislative Liaison and primary trainer in "Communications Access." He is a member of the Chicagoland Black Deaf Advocates; the National Association of the Deaf; and the Illinois Association of the Deaf. He served as President of the National Black Deaf Advocates, Inc. from 2011 to 2013; and served as Vice President and Chairman of the Board from 2007 to 2011. He was a Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission from 2007 to 2012. **Mr. Ogunyipe** received a B.A. from Gallaudet University and an M.P.A. from the School of Public Service at DePaul University. We congratulate **Benro** as he brings a wealth of knowledge and energy to his new NCD appointment and we are full of pride that he is one of our team members. Congratulations, **Benro**!*



Secretary Michelle R.B.Saddler appoints Director of Human Recourse for the IDHS

Our new Director of the Office of Human Resources is Lynn Oda. A native of Chicago, Lynn has extensive experience in Human Resources and strategic planning. Her most recent position was Director of Human Resources for Sun-Times Media and related technology start-up companies for Wrapports, the Sun-Times parent company, where she worked on human resources and strategic issues including transformation and organizational development.

She started her career with Allstate Insurance Company where she held a variety of corporate positions and was head of human resources in the company's Midwest Regional Operations Center and in the New England Regional Office.



Lynn also worked on executive searches as Director of Client Services specializing in middle and senior management placements in a variety of industries both nationally and internationally.

Lynn is a Business Administration graduate of the University of Illinois, Chicago and has a MBA from the University of Phoenix. She holds a certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources.

Ngoan Le returns to the IDHS to fill void left by retiring Edwin Silverman

Ngoan Le is returning to the IDHS to help fill the huge void left by the retirement of Edwin Silverman. Ngoan will serve as Acting Chief of the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services. She will help maintain continuity and consistency in the bureau that oversees programs that help immigrants and refugees achieve successful integration in Illinois.



Many IDHS staff members know Ngoan from her most recent capacity as Vice President of Programs at the Chicago Community Trust (CCT). At CCT, Ngoan was responsible for directing Trust grant making activities that provided approximately \$35 million in private funding for non-profits in the Chicago region in five program areas: arts & culture, basic human needs, community development, education and health.

Ngoan is an accomplished professional with more than 20 years of top-level management experience with non-profit organizations, state and city agencies, and private foundations.

Prior to her position at the Chicago Community Trust she served as the Deputy Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Human Services. She previously worked at IDHS as an Assistant to the Secretary working on housing, welfare

reform and services to immigrants and refugees.

Ngoan has a B.A. in Foreign Language Education, French and Spanish, from Illinois State University. She studied English Literature at Saigon University/College of Pedagogy, Vietnam.

Please join us in welcoming both Lynn and Ngoan to IDHS! If you happen to see them around, introduce yourself and say hi!

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We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of our Public Engagement Newsletter. As always, please feel free to forward and share our newsletter and attachments with your networks, partners, colleagues, customers, friends, and those in your circle of influence and beyond!

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