



SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

May 2014

Medi-Medi Patients HMO Update

We have received notification that persons on dialysis are EXEMPT from the mandatory enrollment of Medi-cal into an HMO. So, if you have received a letter stating that you must enroll your medi-cal, this is an error. Please call the number listed on the letter and let them know that you are on dialysis (ESRD). You do not have to enroll your medi-cal into an HMO at this time, but if you receive the letter you must call to let them know you are an ESRD patient.

Support Group for Dialysis Patients and Family

The support Group is held at Desert Community Bank on the corner of Silica and Hesperia Rd. 2nd floor. It continues to meet every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

This Month's meetings are May 13th and May 27th.

Safety Net Grants

American Kidney Fund is still accepting grant applications. Their grant is to assist patients with dialysis related expenses. Limit of \$100 per year per patient. Talk to your social worker about applying for assistance paying for medications, transportation, or other health related expenses. For those who have applied already, there is a delay in processing.

Health Insurance Premium Payment

The American Kidney Fund also has a grant to assist patients in paying for health insurance. Eligibility for this program includes:

- 1) Premium is not automatically deducted from your social security.
- 2) After your basic bills are paid, you have less than \$500 left over.
- 3) You have no liquid assets over \$3000 that could be used to pay the premium.

Please talk to your social worker if you meet these three requirements to apply for this program.

Housing Voucher (AKA Section 8)

We have received many inquiries on Section 8 housing recently. While most areas have closed even the waiting list, Barstow area still is accepting applications. Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Orange County areas are completely closed.

Free Home Phones

Our visit from California Telephone Access Program was a huge success. Over 50 free phones given to Desert Cities Dialysis patients to help use the phone easier. If you did not get a phone, or are interested in a more accessible and user friendly phone, please talk to your social worker.

Amethyst Unit Update

We continue to wait for our certification from the State of California Health Department. Again, if you wish to move to our Amethyst unit please make sure that you complete a transfer request.





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Diabetic Shoes

If you are diabetic and have any difficulty with circulation or history of sores on your feet, your insurance likely pays for diabetic shoes every year. Talk to your podiatrist or your primary physician to have diabetic shoes ordered for you.

Would you like to work, but thought you would lose your disability or SSI benefits?

Social Security's work incentives and ***Ticket to Work programs*** can help you if you are interested in working. Special rules now allow you to work temporarily without losing your monthly Social Security disability or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. **A nine month trial period allows you to test your ability to work without any risks to your benefits. You can get full disability payments during this period no matter how much you earn.**

After this nine-month trial period, you can work an additional three years risk free and still receive benefits for any month in which your earnings do not exceed certain limits:

- \$1,740 for blind individuals; or
- \$1,040 if you are not blind.

Additional incentives to help you succeed back in the work force include:

- Continued Medicare or MEDICAL while you are working; and
- Help with education, training and rehabilitation to start a new line of work.

For more information you can call toll free 1-800-772-1213 or visit their website at

www.socialsecurity.gov/work.

Vocational Rehabilitation

If you are interested in returning to work but do not have the job skills or your health interferes with working, then Vocational Rehab. May be the option for you! It retrains, teaches skills in managing disabilities in the workplace, pays for schooling or trade school. Contact your Local Vocational Rehabilitation office and fill out an application to begin services:

(760) 243-6024 (Voice)

(760) 245-4127 (TTY)

15415 W. Sand Street - Second Floor
in Victorville.

Copays for Medications

Social workers are applying for persons who need assistance with paying copays. Programs exist that can help you. Please let your social worker know if you are having trouble affording your copay, or if your copay seems higher than it should be. Individuals and couples may qualify for Low Income Subsidy (Extra Help) to get medication at a discounted copay as well as avoid the medicare donuthole. You can apply online www.ssa.gov or call social security to see if you qualify.

Humor

