

PLACE MATTERS
Social Services Administration Newsletter

MD CHESSIE Hot Line
1-877-DHR-2PAY

As of November 1, 2008, Foster Care Provider payments are being based on information in the MD CHESSIE System. Foster Care Providers will receive their first automated payment in the checks mailed December 23, 2008. A summary of the new process is outlined below.

A Statement will be sent to Providers at the beginning of each month. Providers will verify that the Statement is correct. If no changes are made, a payment will be mailed on the 23rd of the month based on this Statement.

If corrections are made, a Final Corrected State-

ment will be sent to Providers on the 13th of the month. Payments based on these Final Corrected Statements will be mailed on the 23rd of each month.

In order to accommodate questions about the Payment Statements, DHR has installed a **Toll Free "Hot Line", 877-DHR-2PAY (877-347-2729)**. Call Center staff will be available to take **Hot Line** calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. beginning December 1, 2008.

SSA is posting information on the front page of our DHR website, enclosing a brochure in the



November payment and the new Foster Parent Ombudsman, John Bertulis, is meeting with each Jurisdiction's Foster Care Association to personally share the new information. Additionally, there will be two (2) Press Releases and an internal News Brief.

DHR is committed to providing excellence to the families providing Foster Care in the State of Maryland. Please help us get the word out to our Foster Families!

Maryland continues to make strides to enhance its Quality Assurance System.

November 2008

Volume 1, Issue 5

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**HAPPY
 THANKSGIVING!**

Transitioning Youth

As we continue to carry out our Place Matters agenda we have partnered with The Annie E. Casey Strategic Consulting Group, and The University of Maryland School of Social Work to implement the Transitioning Youth to Family

lies (TYTF) initiative in Baltimore and Washington Counties. TYTF is an individualized, family-centered effort to appropriately transition youth from group care settings into family care and achieve permanency. Maryland's strong pro-

Susan Coppage

vider network will be engaged to wrap services around children in family settings enabling them to return to their communities. Preliminary work has begun in both Baltimore and Washington Counties.



Quality Assurance

Dee Ritterpusch

The state's Local Supervisory Review Instrument (LSRI) is getting a facelift. The LSRI is an outgrowth of Maryland's 2003 Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan. In conjunction with the University of Maryland School of Social Work, the original LSRI has been revamped based on feedback from local department staff.

Local departments indicated a need for a new instrument that was more focused on the quality of family centered practice. The revised supervisory review instrument is designed to provide su-

pervisors with a standardized tool to assess quality of practice toward achieving child welfare outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being. The instrument also provides real-time feedback for caseworkers.

Beginning in November of 2007, the revised instrument was piloted in Harford, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Caroline and Baltimore Counties as well as Baltimore City. The School of Social Work also conducted a validation study of the revised instrument, in which local child welfare staff participated. Feedback from the local depart-

ments have been an ongoing part of the development of the new supervisory review process. The revised instrument will soon be available statewide via the DHR intranet.

Supervisory training on the revised instrument is being conducted regionally by the University of Maryland Child Welfare Training Academy, beginning October 2008. For more information contact Shirley Brown, Manager, Quality Assurance Unit at 410-767-7152.

Foster Parent Ombudsman

John Bertulis

Ombudsman is a Swedish term of long and honorable tradition. The ombudsman helps people resolve their differences with public officials.

In September 2008, Mr. John Bertulis was appointed Foster Parent Ombudsman for the Foster Parents in the State of Maryland.

The foster parent ombudsman reviews and mediates inquiries made by or on behalf of Maryland's public foster par-

ents. This is an autonomous position that reports directly to the Secretary.

Resource parents have an advocate and listener in the new ombudsman. Each foster parent will be empowered to settle any issues directly with the local department. If there is no resolution, the ombudsman will intervene in a neutral and impartial manner.

John is also responsible for a new quarterly statewide foster parent newsletter,

coordination of exit and satisfaction surveys, and education about foster parents rights in the State of Maryland.

Currently John is traveling around the State informing foster parents and staff about the role of the ombudsman and assisting in the training for the new foster parent payment process.

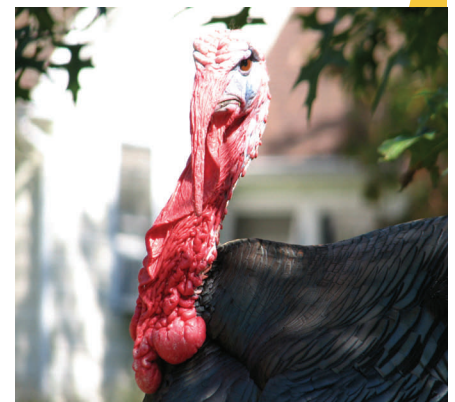
Feel free to share John's contact information, 410-767-7561.

Adult Programs

The Project Home Program, in conjunction with the Maryland Board of Nursing and the University Of MD School Of Pharmacy, has been working for several months on developing a protocol for the utilization of Nurse Consultants in the Project Home program to assist case managers and providers with issues related to client self-administration

of medication. Training will be held for all local Department Project Home case managers and Nurse Consultants on the use of the protocol and the newly developed manual during October and November. For information, contact Kathleen Ward, Program Specialist, Office of Adult Services, at (410) 767-7422.

April Seitz



Child Welfare Practice and Policy Programs

Deborah Ramelmeier

SSA has established workgroups (separately facilitated by Child Focus, the National Resource Center on Adoption and Casey respectively) made up of SSA, Stakeholder and local DSS personnel to focus our efforts in the following areas:

1. Kinship Care ~ We are focusing our discussion on evaluating the current service array for relatives caring for children. We have produced a one-page FACT sheet to be provided to kinship caretakers to ensure that they are aware of the
2. Post permanency ~ this workgroup's goals is to assess the current service array as it pertains to children who have attained permanency via the Child Welfare System, including reunification, relative guardianship and adoption.

available services. We have also updated the Kinship Care webpage on the DHR website. Future meetings will look at service gaps and ways to fill those gaps. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Pamela Miller at SSA.

The workgroup is just beginning its work and is being led by Anita Wilkens.

3. Family Centered Practice ~ The Family Centered Practice model is well on it's way to hitting the DSS street. Family Involvement meetings are active in the majority of jurisdictions. The FCP Steering Committee has split into three subgroups: Practice, Communication and Training to develop the nuts and bolts of the model. Karen Powell is the identified lead for SSA.

National Adoption Awareness Month

Jill Taylor

November is National Adoption Awareness Month and this year's focus is the adoption of children currently in Foster Care. On Saturday, November 22, 2008 the Maryland Department of Human Resources' Social Services Administration is sponsoring the 12th Annual Statewide Adoption Celebration to honor adoptive families and local department staff. During Fiscal Year 2008 a total of 617 children were adopted.

The celebration will occur at The Mansion House on the grounds of the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. The event includes an award presentation to the families and staff, a luncheon, "Animal

Ambassadors" and tickets to the Zoo for the families.

12th Annual Statewide Adoption Celebration



Foster Care Stories

Nancy Blackwell

Tune in to *Maryland Public Television* on November 20 at 9:30 PM to Foster Care Stories: A Place to Be. This documentary, by Academy Award-winning film maker Bill Whiteford, is an insightful look at the children in Maryland's foster care system. During the hour broadcast, MPT's phone lines, (1-800-222-1292) will be open to

viewer calls to foster and adoptive care resources around the state. The phone lines will be staffed by DHR and other community organizations. The Secretary, local Department staff, current foster families and foster alumni will be interviewed live during the broadcast.

This documentary was underwritten, in part, by The Annie E. Casey

Foundation. Community outreach is made possible through the generous support of the Freddie Mac Foundation. MPT has included interactive pages on their website (<http://www.mpt.org/mptinthecommunity/programs/fostercare/index.cfm>) (<http://www.mpt.org>) in preparation for the airing of the documentary.

PLACE MATTERS
Social Services Administration
Newsletter

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1000 by 2010

We are on the web at
<http://www.dhr.state.md.us>



Congratulations to
The Office of Adult Services

April Seitz

Last month, Program Specialist Valarie Colmore was elected to the Board of the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) as the Northeast Region II representative. Valarie has been long involved with the regional and national activities of NAPSA, including their Public Policy Committee.

Also, John Kenney, Adult Services Administrator for Washington Co. DSS, was awarded the "Spirit of NAPSA" Award at the National Adult Protective Services Association Conference, held last month in Chicago. John received this national recognition for his long-standing dedication, effectiveness, and professional commitment to the protection of and services to vulnerable adults.

Congratulations to both our colleagues Valarie and John for these well-deserved honors!!

CONGRATULATIONS to Ann Walker

Congratulations are in order to Ann Walker who was nominated and won the Customer Service Award on October 9th 2008!!!



Maryland Awarded \$8.4 Million

By Kevin Keegan

Maryland will receive a total of \$8.4 million over the next six years from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to improve mental health outcomes for children, youth, and families served by, or at risk of entering, the State's foster care system.

The grant award is the result of the continued partnership between John M. Colmers, Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Brenda Donald, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources to address the mental health needs of Maryland's youth in foster care.

This award will build upon the

strengths of Maryland's Public Mental Health System and the success of DHR's signature child welfare initiative, Place Matters, which promotes safety, family strengthening, permanency and community-based services for children and families in the child welfare system in the least restrictive settings.

Resources from Maryland's current SAMSHA Mental Health Transformation Grant along with the Governor Martin O'Malley's Fiscal 2009 funding of Foster Care Mobile Crisis Teams were used to leverage and support Maryland's successful grant application.

In Maryland there are approximately 9,222 children in foster care, of

which approximately 5,440 are from Baltimore City.

Service dollars awarded under this grant will be targeted to the neighborhoods in the City, where the majority of the youth and families in foster care reside.

Through a solid infrastructure and carefully planned statewide strategies, this grant opportunity will also support adapting the model developed in Baltimore City for statewide application.

