

REVOLUTIONS

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



CIL SWKS staff at the Garden City office
(Photo by J.T. Kent)

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Kansas program for disabled to stop taking applicants

BY DION LEFLER, The Wichita Eagle

Faced with a growing number of applicants for disability services, the state is freezing entry into a program that helps disabled people stay in their own homes.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services announced Monday that effective immediately, no new applicants will be accepted into the physical disability waiver program.

The program is designed to help disabled people stay out of nursing homes and lead more independent and productive lives.

The freeze is depressing news for potentially thousands of disabled

The freeze is depressing news for potentially thousands of disabled Kansas residents, said Sue Elmer, vice president of community support services for the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation in Wichita. "It means people aren't going to be getting help," Elmer said. "They really want that opportunity to be productive and active, especially if it's someone with a new disability from something like a spinal cord injury or head injury."

The freeze will be in effect until at least July 1, and any new applicants will go onto a waiting list for services, according to SRS.

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Executive Director Troy A. Horton



Be Prepared!

In the economic situation of today, you may not be affected yet and may even think you are isolated from this because you

live in a rural area and your job is secure. You might even be better off right now with gas prices much lower.

This is not the case, cause and effect will start taking place. People losing jobs, creates less money being spent in the state and communities, therefore Governments will need to cut spending which causes business to cut expenses and then starts the cycle over. Eventually it will affect you in some way at some point in time.

First put some money in a savings account then pay off high interest bills.

- Be Prepared,
- Don't over spend,
- Don't use credit cards,
- Advocate for programs and services you and your family needs.

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Kansas program for disabled to stop taking applicants

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The last time SRS had waiting lists for physical disability services was in 2003.

"During the current fiscal year, the rate of growth in the waiver has increased significantly, far outpacing the appropriated funding levels," said an agency news release. "This action is not taken to cut the budget, but to avoid further overspending."

SRS spokeswoman Michelle Ponce said the disability waiver program has grown from a monthly average of about 6,500 recipients last year to 7,300 now.

Part of the growth appears to be a result of quicker processing of applications, but other than that, "we actually do not know right now why there's been a big increase," Ponce said. The increase has come at a time when the state is struggling to close a \$140 million budget gap this year and facing a potential \$1 billion-dollar shortfall by 2010.

Although SRS is among state departments being asked to cut spending, it has been able to cover the increased waiver costs so far and there is no plan to cut services for people already in the program, Ponce said.

The program cost about \$109 million in the 2008 fiscal year that ended in June. Program participants received, on average, about \$1,400 a month in assistance, Ponce said.

Poor trade-off?
Elmer said freezing the program doesn't appear to make much sense fiscally.

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Kansas program for disabled to stop taking applicants

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All waiver applicants are already eligible for government-paid nursing-home care, which almost always costs far more than providing services through the home, she said.

Most disabled aid recipients can live on their own with some assistance in daily routines such as bathing or cooking meals, Elmer said.

With adapted technology, many are capable of working -- especially in computer-oriented jobs -- and contributing to the state's tax base, she added.

Elmer said she thinks the growth in applicants is largely a result of more awareness of the waiver program.



The freeze is "pretty disheartening" for disabled people, she said. "It's easy to get your hopes up and think 'This is going to be great,' " she said. "Then you have to hurry up and wait."

Ponce said SRS has no way to judge how fast the waiting list will grow. Elmer said she anticipates it being "very fast."

I just can't imagine they're going to be taking too many people off the waiting list anytime soon," she said. ■

Reach Dion Lefler at 316-268-6527.

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Of interest from the 2009 Legislature:

Rep. Mike O'Neal, R-Hutchinson, defeated House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls - this means that all Committee Chairs could be changed. Sen Steve Morris kept his position as President of the Senate.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
Office of Speaker Melvin Neufeld
785-296-2302

The new **House Minority Leader is Rep Paul Davis D-Lawrence** - Rep Davis has been on the Arc of Douglas County Board so has some experience with disability issues. Senate Vice President John Vratil, R-Leawood, Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka both kept their positions.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
Office of Rep. Paul Davis
785-296-7665

Job Creation, Save Substantial Medicaid Funds, and Do What Disabled and Elderly

Steve Gold, The Disability Odyssey continues.

With the economy belly-up and a buzz for a job creation program, this is an opportunity for the disability and elderly communities to jointly suggest a "threefer:" jobs, saving Medicaid Funds and integration in the community!

Nationally, in FY 2007, out of the \$311.8 billion dollar total Medicaid expenditures, \$46.9 billion (15.6%) was spent to institutionalize disabled and elderly people in nursing homes and \$12 billion (3.9%) to institutionalize people with MR/DD in ICF-MRs. That's right - nearly 20% of Medicaid funds institutionalize people with disabilities and the elderly. (This data has been relatively consistent for a number of years.)

Here's a short list of points to consider: We know:

1. Most of the people in these institutions could reside in the community with appropriate services and supports.
2. Many of these people want to reside in the community but either are unaware of community services or are afraid.
3. Most of these institutionalized people receive primarily custodial care in the institutions (not medical care or treatment), or they do not require medical care or treatment that is not already available and provided in the community.
4. There are long waiting lists for people who want to live in the community and who need primarily non-medical assistance with basic activities of daily living.
5. We have provided for years appropriate and integrated community services and supports for every mirror-image person institutionalized!

So the President-elect and Congress want a jobs program? How about a "Personal Attendant Care/Community Service" program? Let's hire and train people to provide attendant care services for people who want to leave nursing homes and ICF-MRs now. This is not inventing a new program, but expanding the successful programs, albeit too few and too small, that exist throughout the country

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Job Creation, Save Substantial Medicaid Funds, and Do What Disabled and Elderly

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This is a program for which existing Medicaid funds which presently go to the institutions could go to persons with disabilities and elderly who are nursing home or ICF-MR certified and who want to have funds to hire, supervise, etc their attendants.

It's really not rocket science! It's not even a novel idea [see the Community Choice Act that has been reintroduced in Congress for years].

It takes courage to take on the institutional industries that keep people unnecessarily institutionalized and that have

contributed to our elected political officials who are apparently beholden to the industries.



Can it be changed? Yes it can! But, power concedes nothing without a struggle.

Steve Gold, The Disability Odyssey continues.

To contact Steve Gold directly, write to stevegoldada@cs.com or call 215-627-7100.

Back issues of other Information Bulletins are available online at www.stevegoldada.com.

Southwest Kansas Grief Support Team You Are Not Alone

Are you suffering the loss of a loved one? You are not alone. St. Catherine Hospice & the Southwest Kansas Grief Support Team know grief is a natural part of life & that each person's grief & coping skills are unique. St. Catherine Hospice & the Southwest Kansas Grief Support Team are sponsoring a Grief Support Group the 3rd Tues. evening of every month from 7:00-8:30 PM (December 2008 meeting will take place on Tue. December 2nd instead of Tue. December 16th) and the

1st Thursday afternoon of every month from 2:00-3:30 PM (January 1st, 2009 moved to Thursday January 8th, 2009) at the Finney County Senior Center, 907 N 10th , Garden City. The Support Team intends to allow participants to share their feelings and gain the tools necessary to help them as they walk their grief journey. These are opensupport groups, there are no age limits, participants may join or exit the groups at any time and all groups are free of charge.

For more information and questions concerning the support group call Chaplain Billy Kryger or Gina Cash, St. Catherine hospice 800-281-4077 or 620-272-2519.

Prairie Land Food

Prairie Land Food is a Kansas Not-for-Profit/501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to helping those who help others. By celebrating and uniting communities through cooperation and volunteerism we build a stronger and bright future for all concerned.

Do you volunteer as a 4-H leader or a soccer coach, sing in the church choir, teach Sunday School, or volunteer in the church nursery. Do you pick up trash on your daily walk, say a pray for those in need, visit a homebound friend, or give of your time in some other way? If so, you are eligible to participate in Prairie Land Food.

Our program offers a nutritious grocery package which includes a wide assortment of frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, just like you see in major grocery stores in exchange for your volunteer hours. Packages are offered at a low cost, helping to s-t-r-e-t-c-h your food dollars.

PRAIRIE LAND FOOD is not a government funded program; there are no income guidelines. We are funded through you – the participant. The more people that participate, the greater the buying power, and the more communities will benefit through volunteer service.

No fine print, no gimmicks, no term commitment how often you participate is up to you!

How It Works ...

Do you sometimes spend your free time tutoring a friend or their loved one? Babysitting for a mother you know who's in need of help? Coach a team at a local grade school in the evenings? Or perhaps even help out by carpooling your child's friends to or from school on occasion? That's all it takes to be eligible!

Prairie Land Food is a great way to get people involved in the community. Volunteering can make a difference in a community or in someone's life.

Prairie Land Food is a program that was designed around the idea of giving a helping hand to people in your community. In return they will be offered a nutritious grocery package at a low cost, helping to stretch your food dollar.

Here's how it works:

Once a month, we set a menu of 13-14 items dependant on market fluctuations, which include 6 meat items for a Prairie Pak. In addition, we offer the option to purchase additional items, which tend to be the main course in any family meal or gathering.

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After all orders are received, volunteers will work together to help get all food ready to be shipped to each site and then loaded onto temperature controlled semi-trucks, and sent on their way to their destinations.

Reaching each host site, the bulk order is unloaded by volunteers and taken to be sorted out to complete every participant's order. Check out our monthly Calendar Page so you won't miss out this month.

Orders can be paid by cash, check, or EBT/food stamps or online.

PRAIRIE PAK:

Includes frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables
\$20.00 plus \$3.00 Transportation Fee and 2 hours
volunteer service
(a site donation maybe added at some locations - up to \$1)

MEAT ONLY PACKAGE:

Add an extra serving of the meats in the Prairie Pak
\$13.00 and 1 hour volunteer service

FRUIT & VEGETABLE PACKAGE:

Add an extra serving of the fruit and veggies in the Prairie Pak
\$11.00 and 1 hour volunteer service

SPECIALS:

Prices for these packages vary, but usually cost
\$11.00 to \$20.00 and 1 additional hour of volunteer service.

Site Locations

Host sites are the heartbeat of Prairie Land Food. A host site is any type of business, organization, church or individual that has a building and volunteers to help take delivery of the food and distribute the packages to the volunteers. ■

Prairie Land Food November Recipes

NO CRUST STRAWBERRY PIE

Jodi Williams - Beatrice, Nebraska

- 24 oz. fresh strawberries
- 1 (2.1 oz.) pkg. sugar-free cook & serve vanilla pudding
- 1 (.6 oz.) pkg. sugar-free strawberry jello
- 2 cups water
- Sugar-free whipped topping, optional

Prairie Land Food offers:

- * A quality monthly food package at a reduced cost
- * An opportunity for your organization to make a real difference in your community
- * Create partnerships with other community organizations
- * The empowerment for people to do for themselves while enhancing the quality of life for everyone

If you would like the current months menus and specials, or for information about Prairie Land Food contact the Developer for your area:

Southern Kansas and Oklahoma
June Glasgow 800-998-9436
june@prairielandfood.com

KYEA Accepting Applications for 2009 KYLF

Kansas commission on Disability Concerns.

The Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy is now accepting applications for the 2009 Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. The Forum will be held June 16-20, 2009. KYLF is a week long leadership event for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. We will....

- Bring together young people with disabilities to share information with each other. Includes such topics as leadership, activism, goal setting, assertiveness, disability awareness, advocacy, disability heritage, and much more.
- Involve numerous presenters, community leaders, legislators and other professionals who will interact with the students.
- Identify existing barriers to personal and professional success and develop plans to deal effectively with those barriers.
- Assist in developing a "Personal Leadership Plan" which will include specific action plans for the students when they return to their communities.
- Participate in activities such as: small group discussions with fellow students, large group presentations by successful community leaders, a formal luncheon with community mentors, a picture at the State Capitol, an activity in the Senate chambers, a resource fair and Real Life Fair, a talent show, and a dance.

Please see the fact sheet

<http://ks-commissionondisabilities.civicplus.com/DocumentView.asp?DID=424>

for specific details. Deadline for applications is December 15, 2008. The application is located at

<http://ks-commissionondisabi>

<lities.civicplus.com/DocumentView.asp?DID=422>

For more information contact

Carrie or Julia at 785-215-6655.



KS Youth Empowerment Academy
PO Box 475
Topeka, KS 66601

The Kansas Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

The Kansas Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) will begin accepting applications January 20th, 2009 and will accept them through March 31, 2009. Applications will be available at all SRS offices and Access Sites.

The program is to assist with heat utilities and can cover natural gas, electric, propane or wood. The benefits can be split between the gas and electric utilities. Last year SRS provided benefits to 43,000 households, so it is extremely important to file early as funds are limited.

Benefits are determined by the number of persons in the household, the type of building construction, (wood or masonry), the number of units in the building, the income level of the occupants and the type of fuel used.

Proof of payment on the utility bill and proof of income must be provided with the applications.

Applications received by SRS prior to January 20th will be rejected and a new application will need to be filled out. It is extremely important that the applications be in the name of the person whose name the heat utility is in.

Kansas Mission of Mercy 2009 FREE Dental Clinic February 20, 21, 2009 Manhattan, Kansas

United States National Guard Armory,
located just east of Manhattan on U.S. Highway 24.

Doors open at 5:30 a.m.

No Eligibility or Income Requirements
No appointments - First come, first served.
Serve Children and Adults.
Services include fillings, cleaning, extractions.

CIL SWKS welcomes Matt Bardgett and Jessie Hernandez

Matt Bardgett is the new Information and Referral Specialist in the Garden City office. He enjoys "helping consumers move towards independence through establishing the consumers linkage with existing resources."

Jessie Hernandez has joined CIL SWKS as the IL Advocate in the Liberal office. Jessie brings a deep interest in providing individual and group counseling to consumers and incorporating disability awareness.

Announcing Two New Support Groups for 2009

What are they?

Support groups for anyone interested, current customers and community members.

When does it meet?

The support group for Cerebral Palsy, facilitated by Stacy Ritt, meets Wednesdays from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

The support group for Head Injury, facilitated by Stacy Ritt, meets Thursdays from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Both groups meet in the Center's Conference Room

(at the Center for Independent Living Southwest Kansas, 1802 East Spruce Street, Garden City, KS.)

What will this group offer?

This group will offer support about experiences common to Cerebral Palsy, and Head Injury survivors.

What is the goal of the group?

The goal of the group is to provide safe conversation and gain knowledge and support from other members of the group and the group facilitator.

Must I sign up ahead of time?

No, just feel free to drop in when the group is scheduled.

If I have questions, who do I call?

Call the Center at 620-276-1900 and ask to speak with Stacy Ritt.

December 2008 Recipes of the Month

Homemade Salsa

- 1 cup fresh tomatoes, washed and chopped
- 1/2 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- 1/2 cup onion, diced
- 1 T. jalapeno peppers, chopped
- 2 T lime juice
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, finely diced

Cook corn, then chill in refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Combine all ingredients. Serve with baked tortilla chips or fresh veggies, cut up.

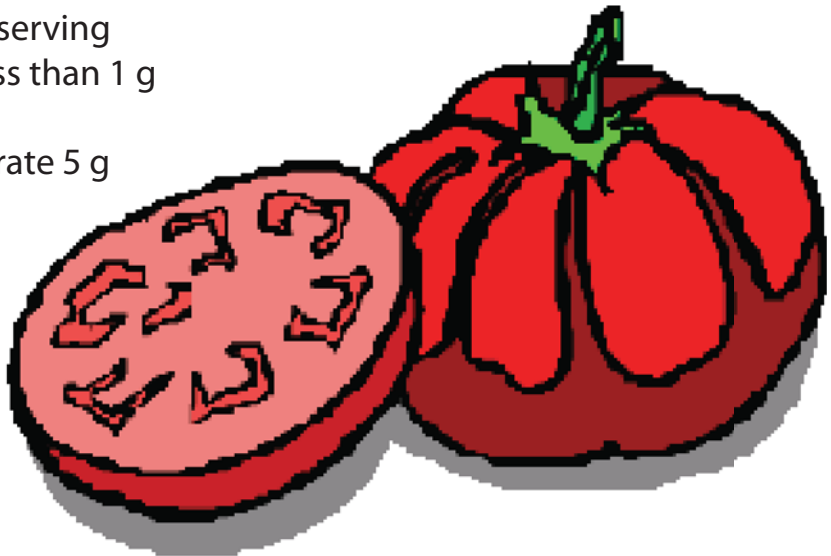
Makes 16 oz or 8 servings

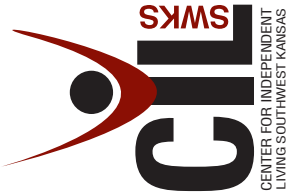
20 calories per serving

Dietary fiber less than 1 g

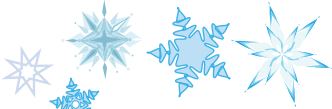
Protein 1 g

Total carbohydrate 5 g





Happy
Holidays



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Web: www.cilswks.org

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The Center for Independent Living in Southwest Kansas offers all of its service in any of its offices. If you are in need of assistance, please contact the office nearest you. n of all.

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620.275.1900

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