

# JOB AND FAMILY MATTERS

Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services

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## TurnAround Ohio!

By Nichole Barcus

The FIS Division will encounter multiple Medicaid changes in 2008! A majority of these changes are a direct result of Ohio Governor Ted Strickland's new "TurnAround Ohio" Initiatives. Governor Strickland proposes to, *"Stabilize health costs for government and businesses alike and advance the health of our citizens by increasing the number of Ohioans who have access to affordable, high quality healthcare, preventing illnesses and injury and focusing on community-based services for children, families, older adults and persons with disabilities."*

What does this mean for FIS? – Becoming experts on six new Medicaid initiatives.

That's right, **SIX!** These programs include:

1. Removal of the 24 Month Clock
2. Foster Care Children Expansion
3. Pregnancy Expansion
4. Healthy Start Expansion With Premiums
5. Children's Buy-In
6. Medicaid Buy-In for Worker's With Disabilities (MBIWD)

The first three initiatives were implemented effective January 1, 2008. Removal of the 24 month clock allows families that became ineligible for Medicaid benefits due to a time-limit, to continue to receive coverage. The Foster Care Children Expansion provides individuals in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday potential eligibility for Medicaid up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday regardless of income or resources. The Pregnancy Expansion permits pregnant women with countable income below the 200% federal poverty guidelines (FPL) to be eligible for coverage—as opposed to having income below the 150% FPL.

The three remaining initiatives are not yet in effect, but should be implemented in April, 2008. One change will increase income guidelines for Healthy Start (a Medicaid program for children under the age of 19) to

between 200% and 300% FPL. Families eligible for services at this income level may incur a premium dependent upon the number of eligible children in the household. A Children's Buy-In program will allow children under the age of 19, with special health needs and countable income above the 300% FPL to be potentially eligible to pay a premium for coverage as well. Lastly, a brand new program has been created known as MBIWD. This program will enable workers with disabilities to earn income and have certain resources without the risk of losing vital health care coverage.

The FIS staff will soon receive training to be able to determine eligibility for these programs. Through the hard work of the FIS staff—as well as caseworkers across the state of Ohio—Governor Strickland's ultimate goal of increasing the number of Ohioans eligible for Medicaid services will surely be achieved.

## New Domestic Violence Policies

*"It is estimated that 50% to 60% of welfare recipients have experienced domestic violence over their lifetimes and 20% to 30% are current victims of abuse." (Tolman and Raphael, 2000)*

This startling statistic is one of the reasons the FIS staff will increase efforts to screen cases for domestic violence. Although domestic violence has always been a concern, CRISE has been updated to ensure that proper referrals are being made for families involved in domestic violence. Furthermore, individuals subject to domestic violence may not be required to complete certain work activities if they feel completing these activities will place them in dangerous situations. FIS hopes to give assistance to families that may have fallen subject to abuse.

## **Looking Back on 2007 for the Foster Care/Adoption Unit**

By Allison Zam

As we start looking forward to another new year, I cannot help but look at what we accomplished in 2007. Last year our unit lost eight of our foster/adoptive homes for a variety of reasons. Whether it was because they had completed their family through adoption, had health concerns that needed attention, or the death of a spouse we were certainly sorry to see them go. Each of them had something unique to contribute to our team, and we are thankful to have known each and every one of those families. Many of our homes added to their families through adoption. Last year, we finalized the adoptions of five children and gave them a forever home! Having lost eight of our homes, we needed to bring in new families to rebuild our team. The foster/adoption unit worked on many different things to recruit new foster/adoptive families. I went out in the community and talked with different groups, we held an Open House and displayed information in the courthouse for November, and held two bake sales. Both bake sales helped raise almost \$300 for our special services fund. This fund helps us pay for foster kids to get involved in extracurricular activities throughout the year. I was also able to do a radio interview with the local stations. Also in November we put up displays in all of the local libraries for adoption awareness month. The unit purchased many books about adoption and donated them to each of the libraries. All of these events helped to increase awareness about foster care and adoption, and we licensed six new homes. Also, already in January we licensed two new homes and have several others in the process. We are lucky to have a good team of foster/adoptive families and hopefully we will continue to build our team throughout this year. Currently, Sandusky County has 22 foster/adoptive families.

Other things we accomplished last year included hosting a foster parent appreciation dinner in May, and our annual holiday party. Our foster parent appreciation dinner was held at the Thirsty Pony and Hampton Inn and Suites in Sandusky. The foster parents attended training during the day and enjoyed dinner, bowling, and a hotel stay that night. We presented several awards to different families for accomplishments they achieved, as well as certificates for their years of service. This was a great time and the foster parents certainly deserved the recognition.

Our holiday party this year was also a big success! "The Night before Christmas" was our theme and everyone came dressed in their pajamas for dinner, catered by Rudy's, and a visit from Santa. Santa read the kids a story before they sat on his lap to get their picture taken and a gift. This event is for the kids and it certainly seemed as if they had a good time. Many of the events I have talked about, as things this unit has accomplished in the last year, I realized were not done alone. Many of you helped to make these events successful, as well as memorable, by bringing in baked goods for the Bake Sale and donating gifts for the foster kids at Christmas time. It may seem at times as if you contribute and then are never able to hear how things ended up. Hopefully this article will let you know how much your contributions helped us make 2007 a success. We are very thankful to everyone who helped us throughout the year. The foster/adoption unit hopes everyone has a great 2008 as well!



**MIS Marti's Megabytes**  
By Marti Cummings

We received new computers in November! This is part of a state upgrade that is prescheduled from the State. This year they outsourced the project to a different company and the PC's seemed to get replaced fast with minimal downtime. This was very successful.

Northwoods was here last week to upgrade their Compass Data Extractor program. This is the program that grabs the information from CRISE and SETS to help auto fill stay as up to date as possible. It works a bit faster and grabs information better. Northwoods also changed a couple things so I may need to reboot the servers over lunch to install updates. Northwoods used to do this on weekends, but they now have so many users, their person who did this was unable to keep up and get them done through a weekend.

## **Workforce Development Division**

By Suzy Cole

October found Workforce Development winding down with the School Clothing Program. We took 460 applications in which seventy applications had to be denied as the funds were depleted. Most customers who received the vouchers were very appreciative and thanked the staff when they came into the agency to pick up their vouchers.

In November, we began our annual Utility Assistance program. This is to help the customer have their heating source turned back on or to prevent it from being disconnected. They can only use this service once in a twelve month period. We have approved eighteen customers for a total of \$10,830 thus far. This program runs until June 30<sup>th</sup> or until all funds of \$120,000 are depleted.

December is a busy month for tuition assistance as schools resume classes in January. In December, we served seventeen customers and wrote vouchers for over \$18,000 in tuition, books, fees, and supplies.

On December 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, The Job Store in conjunction with Workforce Development held a mass recruitment for Heinz USA. This was done to take applications for Heinz. Within the two days a total number of 750 applications were received. **WOW!!!!**

On December 14, 2007 the WFD staff members, supervisor, administrator, and Assistant Director attended training on WIA Common Measures in Ottawa County. Common Measures are how the State rates the agency's WIA Program. This includes customers who were enrolled, how well they did in their field of study, and their outcome after they received their degree. For example, did they gain employment, how much are they earning, and how long did they stay employed? We learned we need to co-enroll the customers in both Adult and Dislocated, if possible, to get the most bang for the buck.

WFD employees are attending Carol Guice trainings to get an idea of what the customer has to go through before they can receive certain services. Once they attend the training, they complete an evaluation of the training. This is to make certain we are offering our customers the most in demand and productive training sessions possible.

## **CSEA Happenings**

By Becky Bohn

### **CSEA at a Glance...**

#### **2007 Statistics**

- \$12,547,992.78 Child Support was collected
- 98 contempt cases were taken to court by the Legal Dept.
- \$78,070.76 was collected under the FIDM process (Freeze and Seize)
- Genetic testing was done for 378 individuals

#### **Success Story**

It definitely was a "Happy Holiday" for one Sandusky County mother and her two children. The obligor came in to pay off his arrears. The payment of \$11,301.51 was received by the mother on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>!!

#### **Remodeling Project**

If you venture down to the CSEA wing, you will notice that we have made some physical changes to our wing. The former issuance center has been converted into an office for Beth Pfeiffer. This allows Beth to be close to the activity at the front desk/waiting room. We also believe there is some good "karma" from Margie Ohms that has remained in this area! Dean Ross has relocated to Beth's former office. Mandi Miller has moved down to the end of the wing as well. Dean's former office is now the "FTI Filing Room" while Mandi's former office is temporarily empty. Also, we created a "Communication Center" which we think looks great.

#### **FTI Safeguarding Visit**

On January 16, 2008, two State employees conducted a FTI (Federal Tax Information) safeguarding visit. As a condition of receiving FTI, each Child Support office must show that they are protecting the confidentiality of that information. As part of this procedure, the State must conduct on site visits. The visit went well. The agency will receive a report of their findings around Feb. 1, 2008.

# UNION NEWS

## UNION NEWS

Union Corner  
By: Crystal Henson  
Secretary Local 3466

The Union has been very active as usual. Membership has reached over 50% which is great and it shows that we have many employees who want a say in their future at the agency. The Union held officer elections and a member appreciation meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The new officers are President-Sheri Rumschlag, Vice President-Jami Hammer, Secretary-Crystal Henson and Treasurer-Cassandra Walter.

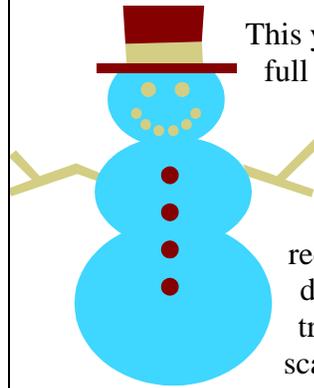
The Union would also like to welcome new members Sasha Bradshaw, Mindy Bowling, Amy Brenner, Sarah Tennill and Dori Ottney. Thanks for showing you care.

The contract is up at the end of 2008, which means that negotiations will be starting this year already! The more employees the Union has, the stronger we will be in negotiations. The Union needs to have a strong representation to help get our employees what they deserve. If you would like to have input on the negotiations and your future contract, please join the Union!! Please see President Sheri Rumschlag, or any Union member, if you are interested in joining the Union or have any questions regarding the Union.



## FUN COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

By: Renee Livas



This years Holiday DJFS was full of FUN activities again.

Our events included:

decorate your office, snowman pass, 50/50, candy guess, favorite recipe board, food pantry donations, cards to the troop, white elephant, scavenger hunt trivia, seasonal trivia, movie trivia, animal shelter donation, seasonal wear day, and holiday "munch"-luck.

- 50/50 winner was Gloria Graham winning \$130.50!
- Candy guess jar was won by Jackie Hamann-Lenke
- Best decorated office/space was Janet Quaintance who had her door and bookcases all decorated as presents
- Favorite recipe chosen was Crystal Vail with Oreo truffles
- Scavenger hunt winner was Sheri Rumschlag
- Seasonal trivial winner was Gabby Henry
- Movie trivia winners were Tami Ward and Gabby Henry

Thanks to all that participated!

*Keep a look out for more fun and exciting events from the FUN Committee!!*



## BY THE NUMBERS.....

**493,158**

The number of hits on the agency website in 2007.

**\$251,803**

The amount of PRC issued assistance in October 2007.

**7,589**

The number of customers that were registered by the CSEA Front Desk.

**454**

The number of Children Services investigations in 2007 involving 898 children.

**\$240,913.12**

The amount spent in 10-07 for 688 children on the subsidized Child Care program.

## “Another Successful Year”

By Cindy Bilby

As we come to the close of yet another successful year, I am reminded of how incredibly lucky I am to be in Sandusky County. Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services, and each of you, individually, touch the lives of thousands of Sandusky County residents – both adults and children. I couldn’t be prouder of that fact.

It’s been a year of impending changes – from SACWIS and Turnaround Ohio to FTI safeguarding and a WIA rescission, we have a lot to be wary of and a lot to look forward to. Through it all, it has been a record year for each of the divisions.

Thanks so much for taking everything in stride and continuing to give the gift of making a difference. What more could a director ask?



### Quote of the Quarter:

*How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.*

**George Washington Carver**