

## CareLink Resource Development Center of York County Business Bulletin News Letter

CareLink RDC is the local Childcare Resource and Referral agency covering all of York County. We would like to share information that would be useful to your employees of your company. The following information is from Every Child matters.

More than 70 representatives from Maine's children's community, area business leaders, state legislators, and staff from congressional delegates gathered at the Holiday Inn in Augusta last Thursday to discuss the plight of our most vulnerable citizens and their families.

With 46,000 of Maine's children living in poverty, over 19,000 without health insurance, some 53,000 alone after school each day, and nearly 9,000 reported abused or neglected, children's advocates are concerned about projected budget shortfalls and how they will affect the state's youngest residents.

The conference, *How Congress Can Make a Difference in the Lives of Children: The Link Between Federal and State Programs in Meeting the Needs of Maine's Children and Families* was sponsored by Every Child Matters in Maine, a state campaign of the Every Child Matters Education Fund (ECMEF) and The Alliance for Children's Care, Education and Supporting Services (ACCESS).

Staff from the offices of Senator Olympia Snowe and Congressman Michael Michaud led a roundtable discussion on children's programs. Brian Whitney, a representative from Senator Olympia Snowe's office, told the audience that the Senator has shown that she is concerned about the future of Maine's children and is willing to "reach across the aisle" to assure that programs that are beneficial to children are available for those that need them.

Discussing the forecast for Maine's children were Jim Clair, CEO Goold Health Systems, Business Roundtable on Early Childhood Investment; Patti Woolley, DHHS Early Childhood Division; Barbara Van Burgel, DHHS Office of Integrated Access and Support; Majority Whip Seth Berry, Maine House District 67; and Claire Berkowitz, Research Coordinator with the Maine Children's Alliance. The state wait list for childcare subsidy, the food stamp and TANF programs and current legislation affecting Maine children and families were among some of the topics discussed by the panel.



Elinor Goldberg, president of the Maine Children's Alliance, talked about the recent reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP. The new legislation will allow the state to insure more children, as well as pregnant low-income women. The recently released Kids Count data shows that 6% of Maine children are not covered by health insurance, half the national rate of 12%, which she said shows that the state program is working.

Michael Petit, president of Every Child Matters and former commissioner of Maine's department of Health and Human Services, said that the federal government should play a bigger role in helping children, especially in this economic downturn. "The federal government must provide "bridge funding" to states until their economies rebound, or deep cuts in children's programs across the country are inevitable." Petit bolstered his case with a power point and monograph, "[A Bridge to Somewhere...](#)"

On the day of the event, the *Bangor Daily News* ran an op-ed penned by Petit entitled [Obama's spending priorities practical for children](#). Several local news organizations, including the *Kennebec Journal*, the *Bangor Daily News*, and WCSH6, covered the event in Augusta. [Click here](#) to see all the coverage.

*Thank you for your help to make children a budget priority.*

Is childcare an issue for your company? Many CEO's, managers, and supervisors are unaware of the importance of quality childcare on their work force. It is the immediate employee's supervisors who's responsibility to meet the company's requirements that often has to deal with the employee's issue as to why they cannot work over time or continue to be tardy or perhaps absent. It is also the immediate supervisor that has to deal with low productivity after 2:00 when the school age kids are going home to an empty house. While parents/employee's watch the clock worrying how there child is doing or better yet what they are doing.

The immediate supervisor is doing what they believe is part of their job description keeping the department running. However they may be hurting the bottom line more than helping by not sharing this concern. Then you have the employee/parents that are calling in sick when they actually have a childcare arrangement issue. Unfortunately it is still not widely acceptable to call into work because you have lack of childcare. We actually set employees/parents up to lie because of what is an acceptable reason to call in as an absence to work.

Finding out what makes your work force tick in these times is crucial to stay on the cutting edge and be competitive with your competition. CareLink RDC can help we can do a survey of your employees to find out what benefits work and which ones don't. We can give you a picture of your workforce.

For more information please call CareLink today. Should you have an employee in need of childcare call CareLink today.

Sincerely,

Cheryl O'Neil – Program Director  
CareLink Resource Development Center