

NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol IV, #5

Coalition Coordinator : Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802 442-5200
The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition is funded by
the Berkshire Area Health Education Center. The Coalition is sponsored and
hosted by North Adams State College

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January 1990
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January Coalition Meeting

Department of Education 57 Main St 2nd Floor North Adams
Handicapped Accessible via Berkshire Plaza 37 Main St

Friday January 12 10 AM to Noon

Meeting Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Introduction of Participants **Who's Who of Who-Man Services**

III. What's Happening **Announcements by Coalition Membership of
interest to all**

IV. Special Coalition Topics: **Fun Folks Report and Local Training
Programs for Human Services :**
*Representatives of area educational
facilities discuss their training
programs*

V. Adjournment and Conclusion

(Bring a Friend to the Meeting)



Coalition News is the newsletter of the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. Its function is to keep the mailing list informed of what's happening around the Northern Berkshire area. It's a service to the entire COALITION mailing list (about 300). Announcements submitted to the newsletter will reach our entire mailing list. So, take advantage of this unique, free mechanism for informing our friends of news important to all. Please submit these announcements to Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201. For insertion into the February newsletter, your announcements should reach Al Bashevkin by January 25.

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What's Happening!

- December's Events

An active December meeting gave Coalitioners much food for thought for the coming months. Discussions during the meeting ranged from options to combat the continuing state budget dilemma to an animated discussion on parenting programs for North County. Miguel Arce of the Western Mass Office of EOHS discussed State perspectives on the budget problems, while John Walter of the Western Mass Food Bank spent some time talking about the difficulties food banks are having nation wide, and how North County agencies can access the Western Mass Food Bank. Jeff Hines of the McInerney Parenting Center (Pittsfield) talked about their program, and Sue Mead and Meg LeRay of the Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association talked about parenting services in North County offered by their agency. Further discussions about parenting programs in North County will ensue during a Jan 2nd meeting of those interested in this topic. The spirited meeting was capped off by a shortened presentation by the Information Outreach Task Force about their plans to increase information and networking for health and human service providers and consumers.

Sadly, State budget difficulties remain uncertain as of the publication of this edition of Coalition News. Word is that the work of Peter Nessen, who has discussed overhauling the State Purchase of Service System among other cost efficient ideas, will be ending his work prematurely due to the State budget problems. With half of the fiscal year gone by, any cuts by the State will have twice the impact on local agencies that they would have if done in July. Health and Human Service workers are playing a waiting game to see what effects cuts have. Job and program insecurity can have a negative effect on workers' morale. It is during these times that Coalitioning, networking, and using our creative resources can be the most beneficial. At

the request of local health and human services advocate, Sinclair Hart, a listing statewide advocacy organizations is included later in this newsletter. Use the organizations on this list, and use your local Coalition to advocate for continued, efficient planning and use of our area services.

Returns from last month's survey about the human services industry are slow, yet offer some insight into the difficulties local agencies have in attracting staff. Ironically, low salaries of the human services industry are the major reason agencies have troubles filling positions. The area nursing shortage impacts recruitment by health care providers. Entry level positions for some direct care agencies oftentimes for positions needed during odd hours, that are difficult to fill. It has been suggested that providers use the newsletter as a central clearinghouse for positions. It was also suggested during the November meeting, that local trainers for health and human services personnel be invited to a future Coalition meeting. The future is here, and an educational forum is planned for the January Coalition meeting. Staff from North Adams State College, Berkshire Community College, Southern Vermont College (RN program), McCann's and BTEP will be invited to the January Coalition meeting to discuss how they can assist area providers with this dilemma. This should prove to be an interesting discussion. So come on out!

The steering committee for the Coalition is doing a bit of soul searching / searching for souls. We are looking for a few good souls who might be interested in serving on this important committee for the Coalition. We are especially interested in having a consumer represented on the steering committee, to keep with the membership mission of the Coalition that includes advocates, consumers and providers alike. So if you've got some interest, contact Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator.

A note from Senator John Olver thanks the Coalitioners for the time and energy they put into collecting signatures for the TEAM petition. Statewide, 109,147 certified signatures were collected for the campaign, including over 29,000 in the four western Mass counties. Tax reform will be a major voter issue in the 1990 election. TEAM is working on a strategy to influence public policy during the upcoming party conventions where platforms and candidates for statewide office will be discussed. See the note from TEAM later in the newsletter that explains how this process might work. Last month's newsletter had information from the Citizens for Participation in Political Action that describes how you might become a delegate to your party convention. Call TEAM (1-800-TEAM-946) if you want more information.



Tax Equity Alliance for Massachusetts

37 Temple Place
3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02111

617-426-1228
1-800-TEAM-946
Budget Hotline: 617-426-8130

December 20, 1989

Dear Friend of Tax Reform,

This month, TEAM exploded onto the ballot with over 130,000 signatures gathered from residents around the state. Your work on the signature drive helped prove to the world that there are two sides to the great tax debate.

What's the next step? We must act now to influence the economic and social policies of the candidates for governor. Whoever wins will be the key player in Massachusetts politics for years to come. We must move to bring the entire field (and the debate) closer to our viewpoint.

The easiest way to reach these men and women is through the party conventions scheduled for this spring and summer. But we have to act now. Caucuses to elect delegates to the Democratic convention are on Saturday, February 3. Republican caucuses will be held in January and on February 3. Individuals can attend and run for delegate, but right now, slates are being formed to collect votes and increase chances of being elected. To be players in the caucuses, we need to get involved now.

The strategy of many progressive groups for the caucuses is to elect uncommitted delegates. If we can elect enough people committed to progressive tax reform and compassionate social policies, our coalition will be a major player when the current (and potential) candidates come wooing delegates.

If you liked being part of the petition process, you'll love the caucuses! Excitement, intrigue and good old fashioned organizing are all required. The caucuses are a tailor made opportunity for bringing together the thousands of people and organizations who worked on the petition drive. Call TEAM to find out how you can get involved in this exciting phase of the campaign.

Remember, Investing in Massachusetts' Future is a long term effort which we will wage on many fronts. Read the enclosed time line (and "Globe" article) describing the process. This is one arena where we need to exert our influence early on.

Happy holidays!


Jim Braude

Call TEAM for
more info!

RE: DEM./REP. CAUCUS/CONVENTION INFORMATION

The following is basic information about how to attend both party conventions, where platforms and candidates for statewide office will be discussed this spring. If you have any questions, call TEAM at 617-426-1228

DEMOCRATS



December 29, 1999: deadline to register as a Democrat to be eligible for election as delegate

January 20, 1990: statewide candidates must submit letter of intent to run to Dem. State Cor.

February 3, 1990: local caucuses to elect delegates (contact city or town committee chairs for information) (Any Dem. can run. Participants must arrive by 7PM; anyone in line at 7:15 will be admitted)

May 1, 1990: final date for any candidate to be considered for nomination at the convention (minimum of 500 signatures of elected delegates required). No candidate whose name has not been submitted by this date can be on the convention ballot

June 1 & 2: convention at Springfield Convention Center

REPUBLICANS

December 15: deadline to register as Republican and be eligible for election as delegate

January 3 - 23: election of 80% of delegates at city and town committee meetings (for schedule, call local town chair). Any Republican can run for delegate, only city or town committee members can vote

February 3: state senate district caucuses to elect remaining 20% of delegates. Locations announced by late December: any Republican can attend, vote and run

March 10: Repub. State Convention, World Trade Center in Boston

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A NOTE ON SLATES

Expect slates in your local caucuses - people who have organized to bring friends and supporters to vote for a pre-arranged list of people. Candidates, ward or town committees, and some organizations (such as unions) are all apt to bring such groups together. Organizing an "uncommitted", broad-based slate increases chances of being elected greatly. Please contact TEAM for some ideas and names of people and organizations in your community who are interested in helping to organize such slates.

**1989 - 90 NORTHERN BERKSHIRE HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES
COALITION SUPPORTERS :**

ORGANIZATIONS

NB Committee on Mental Retardation
Pregnant Adolescent Support System (PASS)
American Red Cross
Berkshire Council on Alcohol and Addictions
Williamstown Housing Authority
Northern Berkshire Support Services
United Cerebral Palsy
Mass Society for Prevention Cruelty to Children
Northern Berkshire United Way
Berkshire Sane/Freeze
AdLib, Inc.
Northern Berkshire Community Action
Visiting Nurse Association of Northern Berkshire
Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association
Williamstown Council on Aging
AdLib North
Child Care of the Berkshires
Mass Department of Employment and Training
HelpLine, Inc.
North Adams Regional Hospital
Women's Services Center
Hospice of Northern Berkshire, inc.
Adams Housing Authority
Town of Adams Community Development Dept

INDIVIDUALS

John Howland, MD
Al Nelson
Pamela Knisley
Al Bashevkin
Steve Green
Suzanne Walker
Len Radin
Diane Balduzy
Michele Ethier
Karen Forney Austin
Kayte Miller

YES, SIGN ME UP AS A COALITION SUPPORTER for 1989-90 !

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Phone _____

- Ind (\$10)
 Sm Org (\$25)
(< \$100,000 budget)
 Lg Org (\$50)
(> \$100,000 budget)

Checks payable to AHEC/NBHHSC. Mail to Berkshire AHEC 725 North St
Pittsfield MA 01201

Areas of Interest

Are you willing to be listed as Coalition Supporter Yes No

NEWS AND VIEWS

*** *And Now, here's Ken!* **Northern Berkshire Tonight**, the talk show of the Coalition (in its third season) will be airing its January show: **Monday, Jan 1 at 7:30** and repeating **Friday, Jan 5 at 8 PM**. The Jan 1st show has a special twist, an opportunity for viewers to call in after the show to voice their own opinions and observations about the Northern Berkshire area and speak with hosts **Ken Swiatek** and **Thorman Hulse**. Guests this month include **Pat Campbell**, Northern Berkshire VNA; **Sinclair Hart**, NB Committee on Mental Retardation; **Nancy Iacuesa**, BCAA; **Al Nelson**, NB United Way; **Fred Nicholaev**, Mass Dept of Public Welfare; **Al Bashevkin**, Coalition Coordinator; and **George Mercier**, NARH. The theme this month is Hopes for the New Year. Join thousands of others who watch the Coalition on TV and enjoy the opportunity to watch Northern Berkshire Tonight on channel 7, Northern Berkshire's local access channel.

*** *Statewide Health and Human Services Advocate Agencies include...* (thank to Mass Human Services Coalition for this list)

- Debbie Weinstein, Massachusetts Human Services Coalition, Inc.
37 Temple Place 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02111 (617) 482-6119
- John McManus, Mass Council of Human Service Providers.
(617) 542-8564
- Jackie Lowe, Mass Association of Day Care Agencies.
(617) 236-8661
- Betty Funk, Mental Health Corporations of Mass..
(617) 451-9635
- Geoff Brahmaer, Alliance for the Mentally Ill.
(617) 367-8890
- Mike Coughlin, Councils for Children.
(617) 727-8900
- Linda Perlmutter, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Association..
(617) 451-0155
- Phil Campbell, Mass Association for Retarded Citizens.
(617) 891-6270

*** There are other advocacy organizations, some of whom serve the Northern Berkshire County area. For inclusion into the next newsletter, please send a listing of your advocacy organization to Al Bashevkin.

*** *Wanna Help?* The Social Security Administration is looking for a few good social services agencies or community organizations who would be willing to serve as **Representative Payee** for incapable Social Security and

Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries who do not have anyone else who is willing and able to serve as their representative payee. Duties include insuring that the beneficiary's needs are met and reporting any changes that could affect entitlement to Social Security. Persons who are mentally retarded, mentally ill, alcoholic or substance abusers, are frequently in need of a qualified person to be their payee. For more information about the Representative Payee Program, contact **Ken Swiatek** at 106 Main St in North Adams or call him at **664-7931**.

***** Looking Ahead . . .** February's meeting is planned to be a legislator's forum. Representatives **Sherwood Guernsey, Dan Bosley, and Senator Peter Webber** have all been invited to attend our February Coalition meeting. Hopefully, budget issues will be resolved by then and we can look forward to honest discussions on the needs of the Northern Berkshire area.

***** Speaking of Space . . .** January's Coalition meeting will be a good-bye of sorts to the Northwest Regional Educational Conference Center and the meeting space they have so generously given us. Budget cuts will close Department of Education's office at the end of January. February's meeting will move to our new location. Thanks to the generosity of the Baptist Church in North Adams (Corner of Eagle and Main - handicapped accessible from Eagle), we will be moving our meetings to their social hall. See you there!

***** A New Practice . . .** Neuropsychological Associates, **Paul Solomon, Ph.D;** **David S. Brown, Ph.D;** and **William Pendlebury, M.D.** is now located at 173 Water St in Williamstown, telephone 413-458-2624. Neuropsychology combines the relevant aspects of psychology and neurology to evaluate and treat cognitive dysfunction. Cognitive disorders may include problems of memory, language, abstraction and problem solving, attention and concentration, perception, visuospatial abilities, and sensory and motor abilities. Cognitive dysfunction is particularly prevalent in the elderly and is a primary feature of Alzheimer's Disease, yet it also may occur in children.

*****Wanna advertise?** The North Adams Commission for Teens and its new Teen Center at 23 Eagle St reports with dismay, that local agencies have not taken advantage of the Teen Center's offer to **display agency brochures**. With a captive audience, this is an offer that should be utilized. There's still time to change. Contact **Diane Erickson** at the Commission for Teens, 663-6581, or after 2 at the Teen Center, 664-7750.

***** Reaching for Resources . . .** The next time you see **Sue Mead, Peg Keller, or Al Nelson**, congratulate them on a job well done. The Northern Berkshire United Way raised more money than ever this year, a year which

saw some tough economic misfortune affect the Northern Berkshire area. About \$492,000 dollars was raised to assist the seventeen member agencies of the Northern Berkshire United Way. With cutbacks in State, County, and Local funding, there's a funding vacuum. The Northern Berkshire United Way won't fill that vacuum, but it sure helps.

*** *Update on Long Term Care* ... The local long term care forum held in Pittsfield in September was a huge success, attracting media attention about long term care issues. There is now a next step planned in this process. The **Families United for Senior Action** (formerly the Villars foundation) has scheduled a statewide meeting of the regional planning groups to discuss how we can, collectively, maximize the impact of the forums. The meeting is scheduled for January 29th in Worcester. If you're interested and want to attend, contact **Michael Marcus or Susan Britt at 617 338-6035.**

*** *Interested in volunteering for the Hospice of Northern Berkshire?* Training programs are offered for potential volunteers. To volunteer, contact **Hospice of Northern Berkshire, 664-6526.**

*** **Tidbits of Info** ... Kudos go to Human Services Advocate, **Sinclair Hart** for his letters to local newspapers regarding State services for the mentally retarded. Let's follow his fine example of speaking out! ... The Coalition will soon have its own monthly column in the Transcript, penned by Coalitioners ... A letter from **Steve Green** follows, describing opportunities at North Adams State College. North Adams State College offers invaluable assistance to the Coalition. Many thanks !!!

*** *Mutual Aid Support Groups* ... Coalition News, as a regular service to its readers, would like to publish a listing of all mutual aid support groups available to residents of Northern Berkshire County. Here's the chance to get the right info on Alzheimer's, Bereavement, MS Support groups, etc. If you or your organization sponsors a mutual aid support group, please fill out the following and send it to Al Bashevkin, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201 for inclusion into a future newsletter.

Name of Support Group _____
Contact Person _____
Phone _____
When does your group meet? _____
Location of meetings _____
Cost for meetings _____ Other info _____



north adams state college

north adams, massachusetts, 01247

To The N.B.H.H.S.C. Newsletter:

We in the Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work Department at North Adams State College are frequently asked about what courses we teach that can provide useful background for those planning to work (or already working) in Human Services. Our response is that we offer a great deal. Students can take a large variety of individual courses covering a range of topics including social work skills, health, aging, social work administration, juvenile delinquency, minority groups, disability, group work, community organization, deviance, and so forth. The Program also offers possibilities for fieldwork through a Practicum course or an Internship.

Students can "package" course work into a major in Sociology or minors in Sociology, in Social Work, or in Health and Aging. As testimony to the viability of these programs one need look only to the high quality of our graduates in Sociology who are currently employed by member agencies of the Health and Human Services Coalition. For instance, such persons can be found at N. Berkshire Mental Health Association, Help Line, Elder Services, Child Care of the Berkshires, and Berkshire Council on Alcohol and Addictions, to name but a few.

Besides our offerings in the day session at N.A.S.C. we offer courses each semester and in the summer through the Continuing Education (evening) division. All above mentioned programs are available through Continuing Education. In Spring 1990, for instance, we will offer the following courses at night:

- Introduction to Anthropology
- Social Problems
- Deviant Behavior
- Health and Aging
- Social Work Skills
- Social Work Internship

For information on registering for any of these call N.A.S.C. Continuing Education at 664-4511, x285; for information specifically about Internship call N.A.S.C. and ask for Michele Ethier (x473); for information about the Sociology major or the minors ask for Steve Green (x475).

The Department has a history of being very involved with local human services. We aim to continue that. We are always interested in your thoughts about what we do; we also appreciate your support.

Best from all of us to all of you for a wonderful (at least survivable) 1990.

Steve Green, Chair
Sociology, Anthropology,
Social Work
N.A.S.C.

Happy New Year Hacks: A Guide for Survival
to Human Service Workers in 1990

by: Tom Wolff, Director
Community Development
Area Health Education Center

As John Cameron Swayze used to say about his favorite watch, "It takes a lickin' and keeps on tickin',"--which may not be a bad summary for the human service system for 1989. We certainly took a licking. Not only were budgets cut, hard earned programs closed or demolished, numerous clients set loose without service, valued colleagues laid off, but as a whole profession we have been badly maligned as "hacks." The work we do, crucial to any caring, democratic State, is to provide services for the most disempowered and needy in our communities. And yet this critical work has been the target of ongoing attacks. What this says to us about the value of our work may indeed be the longest term damage done by 1989. The activists within the human service community have rallied behind various causes across the State to promote fair taxes, to fight unfair cuts, and educate the public. But all too frequently these efforts have fallen upon deaf ears and have reinforced our sense of ourselves as helpless, hopeless, and disempowered. It has been hard to feel like the work we do matters or that, indeed, we matter.

How do we survive in 1990?

1. First and foremost, in order to be of any help to our clients, our agencies, and to any resurgent lobbying and political efforts, we need to be able to take care of ourselves so we do not collapse in the midst of the chronic stress that now exists in the human service system. Stress which comes from clients we care about who cannot get needed services, colleagues we care about who are out of work, agencies we care about that are in conflict and chaos, and the impact all this has upon our own health and well being. The basic principles of stress reduction and positive mental health can be applied. We need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of stress and conflict upon ourselves, our colleagues, and organizations. We need to recognize the problem, discuss it, share it with those who are important to us in our work world and our family life. We need to manage our time carefully, watch our diets, make sure we exercise, and to give and accept positive and caring acknowledgment to our friends and colleagues. We need to have some fun. This has been a period of time where we go from one stressful serious meeting to another, and occasional moments of levity are critical to surviving what has gotten to be an ongoing disaster.
2. The above principles not only apply to individuals but most important, in some ways, apply to the tone and leadership of our

human service organizations. Now, more than ever, we need to create and sustain organizations that are nurturing and supportive for human service workers, who do incredibly difficult work for very little reward. Organizations need to create environments where workers can take care of themselves and where a general tone of giving positive reinforcement and support to workers is the norm as opposed to the exception.

3. Finally, in spite of many, many setbacks, we cannot back off from the long-term commitment to be made to advocate and lobby for a human service system that is humane and of high quality.

In 1989 members of human services were a critical component in the magnificent success of TEAM in gathering over 130,000 signatures for the ballot. TEAM is now promoting the strategy of individuals running to be representatives at either the Democratic or Republican Conventions. Information is circulating, some of which will appear in these newsletters, regarding the steps that one can take to become part of that process. If we can actually pick our issues and our strategies, 1990 can be a year of effective advocacy and lobbying for those things we care most about.

As Nadine Stair, an 85 year old woman from Louisville, Kentucky, said in her poem "If I had My Life to Live Over."

I'd like to make more mistakes next time.
I'd relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier
than I have been this trip.
I would take fewer things seriously.
I would take more chances.
I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers.
I would eat more ice cream and less beans.
I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but
I'd have fewer imaginary ones.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan 1** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : New Years Resolutions Channel 7 7:30 PM
- Jan 2** - **Parenting Services Meeting**: Northern Berkshire United Way 85 Main St North Adams 2 PM
- Jan 3** - **FACT Meeting**: Haskins Community Center Noon
- Jan 4** - **Information/Outreach Task Force** : HelpLine 25 Marshall St North Adams 9 AM
- Jan 5** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : New Year's Resolutions Channel 7 8 PM
- Jan 12** - **All Coalition Meeting** : 57 Main St 2nd Floor North Adams 10 AM to Noon
- Jan 18** - **Steering Committee** / NA City Hall 2 PM
- Feb 6** - **Family Life Support Center Advisory Board** : North Adams City Hall 2:30 PM
-