

NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol IV, #6

Coalition Coordinator : Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802-442-5200
The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition is supported by
the Berkshire Area Health Education Center with funding from UMASS
Medical School. The Coalition is hosted by North Adams State College

February 1990

February Coalition Meeting : **Note New Location**

**First Baptist Church of North Adams 131 Main St North Adams
Please Enter via Eagle St Entrance**

Friday February 9 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 Topic : **Legislator's Forum : *State Senator Peter Webber, Representative Dan Bosley, and Representative Sherwood Guernsey have all been invited to share their perspectives with Coalitioners***
- V. Other Business
- VI. Adjournment and Conclusion

Bring a Friend to the Meeting **Βρiνγiα Φριενδ 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!

- January's Events

January Coalition Meeting

January's Coalition meeting was dominated by discussions of the current economic climate and how it affects the quality of life for residents of the Northern Berkshires. Representatives from Berkshire Training and Employment (BTEP), Southern Vermont College's School of Nursing, DPW's Employment and Training program, and Child Care of the Berkshires Magic Season's Day Care, and the North Adams State College Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work interacted in a discussion about what they can do to train employees to work in the health and human services field. Coalitioners discussed strategies of how to keep NASC students in the Northern Berkshire area for the many employment opportunities they may have here. The area lacks a central career assessment facility to assist those who have no ideas of what type of job they would like to work at. The link with BTEP and the ET program for training practitioners in health and human services is often overlooked. More is discussed about the latter two issues later in the newsletter. Time ran out on our discussions, so an ad-hoc committee was set up to further these conversations. This committee met Jan 23, and there appears to be lots of work to do. A second meeting of the Ad-Hoc Economic Development Task Force has been set for Tuesday, February 13 at 1PM at the offices of the Department of Public Welfare, 37 Main St, North Adams. Join us.

Information Outreach Task Force

Also discussed at the January Coalition Meeting was the work of the Information Outreach (I/O) Task Force for the Coalition. The mission of the I/O task force is to keep the greater Northern Berkshire community informed of health and human service programs and issues. At the same

time, the I/O task force vows to have fun while informing, thus the name fun folks. Among the work accomplished by I/O is *The Human Side*, a monthly column that Coalitioners will write for the Transcript. Our *Power Lunch* (see inside) will offer Coalitioners and the community an opportunity to mingle weekly at lunch time. The Coalition *Speaker's Bureau* (see inside), will offer area organizations a chance to hear from health and human services. And of course, *Northern Berkshire Tonight*, the talk show of the Coalition, is a monthly TV show for the Coalition on local access TV. I/Oer's have more ideas for spreading the word and will meet Tuesday, January 30th to do that.

Parenting Issues Task Force

Out of the December Coalition meeting, lots of interest was expressed for furthering the talks about parenting issues in the Northern Berkshires. Lots is being done for parents locally, yet there is sentiment for doing more. Coalitioners are looking to more consumer driven services. A meeting was held in early January to kick off discussions about parenting issues, and a commitment from many was elicited to serve on a new task force for the Coalition, Parenting Issues Task Force. The next meeting of the Parenting Issues Task Force will be held, Thursday, Feb 22 at 1 PM at the offices of Northern Berkshire United Way, 85 Main St. North Adams (663-9062).

Budget Concerns

Sadly, as of publication date, a new revenue package for the State has not been achieved. The governor's budget for FY 91, by his own admission, is a sorry statement for services throughout the State and will have disastrous effects on the quality of life for the disadvantaged. Without new revenues, the governor has found himself in the position of taking an additional 4% from the budget of health and human services. As many of these expenses are fixed (Federal Medicaid and Welfare), deeper cuts will be made into the infrastructure of health and human services. Lots of information about the Governor's budget is available by subscribing to the **Poor People's Budget** from the Mass Coalition of Human Services (\$35/year). Call them at 617-482-6119 for further info. Briefly, highlights of the Governor's FY 91 budget include:

- Closing intake on Commonwealth for disabled adults and children
- Closing Level 3 long term care facilities, counting houses as assets in determining eligibility for Long Term Care Medicaid, and reducing personal needs allowances for nursing home residents from \$72 to \$35/month. Spouses and children would be asked to pay 10% of nursing home costs for those residents on Medicaid.

- Dramatically reducing spenddown requirements for the medically disabled so they can earn just higher than what the SSI payment would be.
- Elimination of physical therapy, psychiatric day treatment, inpatient psych treatment for children, over the counter drugs, free standing lab and radiology services, and chiropractic services as benefits for medicaid
- Eliminating eligibility for AFDC for 1st and 2nd trimester pregnant women with no other children.
- Eliminating cost of living increases for AFDC for 2nd year in a row.
- Full-time high school and vocational students living on their own would no longer be eligible for General Relief (GR).
- Eliminating the State supplement to the SSI program.
- Ex-offenders will no longer receive two months GR upon release from prison.
- DSS will cut their contracted day care services by 1/3 from FY 90
- DSS open referral services will take further cuts including cuts to their Young Parent's Program, Family Planning, and Therapeutic Services for Families and Adolescents
- DSS closed referral programs (those that are mandated by the courts) will take further cuts.
- All programs offering new affordable housing will cease (HOP, HIF, SHARP, RDAL)
- No new rent certificates for homeless families, turnover of old certificates will cease
- Many EOCDC services will cease, including assistance to CDC's, Commonwealth Service Corps, State fuel assistance, housing services
- Local aid to cities and towns will be reduced affecting our public schools and services.
- Nearly 50 million additional dollars cut from the higher ed budget.

News about the State budget and how it affects the quality of life for the Northern Berkshire area should provide an interesting backdrop for the February Coalition meeting. Our local legislators have been invited for our Fourth Annual Legislator's Forum. So Come on out, and join us for the Feb 9th meeting.

Steering Soul Searching

Steering has spent the past few months describing how the Coalition does business and is nearly completed with that task. We are also 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.



Your Department of
Public Welfare

Carmen Canino-Siegrist, Commissioner

TO: The N.B.H.H.S.C.

It was mentioned to me at a recent coalition meeting that some Human Service Agencies were having difficulty finding qualified applicants to fill specific job openings. Agencies are looking out of the area for potential applicants.

I would like to introduce to you an agency called Berkshire Training and Employment Program (BTEP). They may be able to provide you with the qualified person you need.

BTEP provides Occupational Skill Training Activities such as Classroom Training (CRT) and Customized/Industry Specific Training. The CRT program is mainly group training designed to provide qualified candidates for a particular job need in our area. The Customized/ Industry Specific Training is a flexible program that enables BTEP to address individual needs of agencies and participants. This program may be able to provide you with that hard to find job applicant.

BTEP also provides an ON-THE-JOB training program where by they will pay 50% of an employee's salary up to six months provided the employer will train the person on the job.

In addition, the Department of Employment and Training (formerly the Division of Employment Security) has a network of job ready people who may already possess the skills that you are looking for.

I bring these agencies and programs to your attention so that you know they exist for you to take advantage of. The next time your agency has a job opening please contact me. I will work with BTEP and DET to provide you with a qualified applicant and at the same time help a family find a route out of poverty and become self-sufficient.

Thank You

Bruce Ziter: Employment and Training Specialist
Department of Public Welfare
37 Main Street
North Adams, Ma. 01247
Tel: 664-9951 Ext. 324




Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES **POWER LUNCH**

-An idea of the Information/Outreach Task Force-

Purpose : To provide a place and opportunity for all interested in health and human services to "do lunch". Speakers, chairs, and eating space are provided. BYOL.

Dates, Time, Location . Power Lunch will be each Thursday, beginning Thursday, February 8 from 12:05 PM until 12:35 PM. It will be located at the Shipper's Lounge in Heritage Park.  Bring friends.

Presentors : Topics will vary. Presentors are asked to limit their stuff to twenty minutes (including questions and answers), to insure that there is time for networking and negotiations. Presentors are asked to bring twenty five copies of a one page handout for the participants. If you would like to offer a presentation, contact any member of the Power Lunch Triumverate, Ken Swiatek (664-7931), Thorman Hulse (663-6555), or Al Bashevkin (802-442-5200).

Tentative Topics :

Feb 8 (K)	Business of Human Services
Feb 15 (A)	Caring for our elders
Feb 22(T)	Advocacy in Human Services
Mar 1 (K)	Stress Management
Mar 8 (A)	changes in work incentive for disabled
Mar 15(T)	Northern Berkshire Teens

Other Suggested Topics :

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter and Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Alphabet Soup in Human Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latch-Key Child | <input type="checkbox"/> Questions about Drinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Drop-Outs | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Anti-Poverty Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Screenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Making Disabilities Abilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteerism | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health in the 90's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture/Human Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Retardation |



Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES **Speaker's Bureau**

-Another idea of the Information/Outreach Task Force

Purpose - The Speaker's Bureau is a public information service of the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. Its purpose is to provide a health and human services speaker's network for Northern Berkshire organizations and the media. Its goal is to educate the public about the work of health and human services.

How it will work : Attached is a sign-up form for your participation in the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition Speaker's Bureau. Area groups like the Rotary, Lions, businesses, churches, etc. frequently have requested speakers for their weekly or monthly meetings. Once a list is compiled of all available speakers from the Coalition, a memo will be sent out to as many organizations we have access to. This memo will list the speakers available, the topics they can discuss, and how to contact them. The memo will also be sent to WNAW for participation on the Opinion Show. Your job is to make your talks as interesting and informative as possible. Speakers for the Bureau can also use the Power Lunch as a forum to hone down their speaking skills.

How do I join ? Fill out the following questionnaire, and mail it to Al Bashevkin, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Organization _____

Topic I would like to present _____

Other helpful information

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 February show, **Monday, Feb 5 at 7:30** and repeating **Friday, Feb 9 at 8 PM**. The February show is one about social security and Helpline, so Ken and Thorman's guests are Ken Swiatek of the local social security office and Thorman Hulse, volunteer coordinator of Helpline, Inc. 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.

*** *Local Health and Human Services Advocacy Agencies include...*

- The Citizen Advocacy Program, Commonground, serves the mentally ill as advocates. People need to be a participant of Commonground or Ad Lib, Inc. to enable them to do advocacy. People can do a self-referral or they can be referred by a professional to either program. The contact person in North County is Pam Knisley, 85 Main St--Room 422, North Adams. Phone 663-6200.

- Angela Fields is the Family Advocate in Berkshire County for the Alliance for the Mentally Ill. She serves families with a mentally ill member, as well as individuals and can be reached at Ad Lib, Inc., 442 North St. Pittsfield, phone 448-8242.

- Send the newsletter information about your local advocacy organization so it can be printed here!

*** *Want some Training?* The Berkshire Area Health Education Center will be offering a training on addiction and AIDS, February 26 at North Adams State College. For more information, contact Berkshire AHEC at 447-2417.

*** *Can you plan someone else's future?* . . . One of the gaps in services noted at the January Coalition meeting was for career assessments for hard to employ persons in the Northern Berkshire area. If an agency or individual has the capability to perform a career assessment and would like to do just that, contact Al Bashevkin, (802) 442-5200.

*** *Want to Volunteer?* Commonground is always looking for volunteers willing to give 1 - 4 hours per week to be a "friend" with a mentally ill person. Training and staff support are provided. For more information, contact Pam Knisley at 663-6200.

Tuesdays for twelve weeks starting on April 3, and **Heart Healthy** consisting of two two hour programs starting Tuesday, Feb 20 from 6 to 8 PM.

*** **Mutual Aid Support Groups** . . . We've had limited response from all the mutual aid support groups in the Northern Berkshires, so we'll try this again. 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 _____

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb 5 - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : Channel 7 7:30 PM
- Feb 6 - **Family Life Support Center Advisory Board**
North Adams City Hall 2:30 PM
- Feb 7 - **FACT Meeting** Haskins Community Center Noon
- Feb 8 - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 1:30 PM
- Feb 9 - **All Coalition Meeting** : Legislator's Forum 1st Baptist
Church of North Adams Corner Eagle and Main St
(enter on Eagle) 10 AM to Noon
- Feb 9 - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : Channel 7 7:30 PM
- Feb 13 - **Economic Development Task Force** Department
Public Welfare 1 PM
- Feb 22 - **Parenting Issues Task Force** : Northern Berkshire
United Way 85 Main St North Adams 1 PM
- Feb 22 - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 3 PM

***** Mobility Clinic from United Cerebral Palsy News...** Thanks to a United Way Venture Grant, a wheelchair repair program has been established in Berkshire County. Arthur Bud Fitzpatrick is now operating from a store front location at 471 North St in Pittsfield. It is called a mobility clinic and is operating on a part time basis to see if a full time repair program is feasible. Anyone needing service or adaptations on any therapeutic equipment should call the Mobility Clinic at 447-9555. If Bud is not there, the call will be transferred to the UCP office after the 3rd ring. All insurances, including medicare and Medicaid can be billed for these services.

***** Announcing United Way 'Gifts in Kind'** The Northern Berkshire United Way, through its association with Gifts-in-Kind, Inc. a national not for profit organization created by the United Way of America, can help your 501 (c) (3) agency acquire merchandise for only a minimal administrative fee. Berkshire County agencies have been the recipients of copiers, vacuum cleaners, printers, caulking, computer software, and clothing. Equipment savings are realized and clients are assisted with the distribution of items ranging from household products to toys for children. Available immediately are contributions of computer software from Lotus Development Company and Microsoft Corporation. Ashton-Tate offers at no cost Multi-Mate Word Processing. Other items include Verbatim floppy disks, Eastman Kodak blank video tapes, Redken products, accounting binders, diapers, and disposable razors. Contacts are also available to obtain discounts on purchases of products and services ranging from communications and office equipment to travel services and liability insurance. For more information call the NB United Way at 663-9062.

***** Elder Services Announces** Elder Services of Berkshire County and AARP are sponsoring a Women's Financial Information Program to be held on consecutive Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 beginning on February 21. The lecture/workshop series will run for seven weeks at the Pittsfield Senior Center, 33 Bradford St, Pittsfield. The cost for the series is \$15 per person; scholarships are available. Pre-registration is required. For more information, please call 499-1353.

***** Wellness works at North Adams Regional Hospital** | Many opportunities are available for keeping our health through this diversified prevention program at North Adams Regional Hospital. For more info, contact Maria Rodriguez @ 663-3701 x226. Their program includes:
Strategies for Stress meeting on Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 PM for five weeks beginning Feb 8; **Trimdown** (weight reduction for those over 18) meeting on Wednesdays from 6 to 8PM for twelve weeks starting Feb 7; **Shapedown** (for overweight youths from 12 to 17 years) meeting on

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
Berkshire Food Project

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
Anthony J Siracusa

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

January 17, 1990

Dear Fellow Coalition Members:

I write to you not in my professional capacity as an advocate for the developmentally disabled, but to express my feelings of outrage on a deeply personal level.

Being a visually impaired person in Northern Berkshire has never been easy. But I have been fortunate to have made it through the many battles with very few scars. A situation has been brought to my attention by the Bay State Council of the Blind which will not only effect the visually impaired, but the elderly, and many physically disabled individuals throughout the State of Massachusetts.

The Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is located at the Perkins School for the Blind. This library distributes books and magazines in braille and recorded form free to any person who is legally blind or unable to read conventional print material due to physical disability. The "Talking book" program, and production of braille material is primarily federally funded. The operation of the library depends on funding from the State of Massachusetts.

The average reader of these forms of reading material receives on the average of 25 books per year. Due to the severe cutback, it is projected that we are lucky if we receive 5. If funding to the library is not reinstated, it will close as of July 1. This means that persons who cannot read conventional material will not have access to any reading material.

Imagine not being able to go home and relax with a book. Imagine not being able to run to the library to look up something you need to know. How would you feel to have your basic right to read taken away? I know how I feel. Outrage!

Please help me and other users of the library by contacting our legislators and asking them to make every effort to restore funding to the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. It is everyone's right to read. Don't let that be taken away!

Sincerely

Nancy Rumbolt-Trzcinski

Nancy Rumbolt-Trzcinski