

CCPA Public Policy Fall 2008 Newsletter

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Capitol Corner

Special Session Includes \$3.5 Million in Community Provider Funding for Energy Cost Relief

In the Special Session on Friday, August 22nd the Legislature passed An Act Concerning Energy Assistance (P.A. 08-01 of the August Special Session) agreeing to spend \$75M from the state surplus for FY08 on energy cost relief, including \$3.5M in allocations for nonprofit providers of health and human services for heating assistance grants. Here are the highlights:

- The \$3.5 M in funding stretches beyond purchase of service providers to include other health and human service providers such as adult day care facilities.
- The funding will be allocated through OPM to state agencies in a grant application process that is yet to be determined by OPM.
- OPM must propose a process and criteria for these grants, in consultation

with the purchase of service state agencies.

- The plan must be presented to the legislative committees of cognizance between October 15, 2008 and November 30, 2008.
- The committees have 30 days to approve the plans or recommend modifications.

CCPA lobbied very hard to assure this funding and was the voice of community providers at the Capitol throughout this special session. The Appropriations Committee invited us to speak at an informational hearing on the issue, at which we spoke with key legislators and staff from the executive branch about the need for this allocation and the need for a Community Provider Rescue Fund to address the immediate and long-term needs in the community provider system.

Data and Research

Preliminary Survey Results are in!

CCPA recently conducted a survey of its members to assess what kinds of effects the 0% COLA increase has had on budgets and operations. The findings were telling, with 63% of providers keeping positions vacant and delaying hiring to deal with increased costs and flat funding. Utility costs have increased dramatically, with an average of 46% increase from FY07 to FY09 in gasoline, 48% in heating oil, 17% in natural gas, and 14% in electricity.

The real effect of 0% COLA reaches beyond statistics. Providers must take various actions to deal with 0% this fiscal year that affect clients, families, and friends. If you would like to participate in the survey, please contact Ashley Sales, Coordinator for Public Policy and Programs, at (860) 257-7909 or asales@ccpa-inc.org. Visit CCPA's website for additional survey data analysis and charts at www.ccpa-inc.org.

What's New

• *CCPA's Public Policy Steering Committee met with Professor Fred Carstensen, the Director of the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, Sept. 4th. We had a very productive discussion about how to use data more effectively in our public policy efforts.*

• *CCPA released Member Award Nomination forms for Lifetime Achievement, Spirit of the Industry, and Government Relations, available on the website. Awards will be given at CCPA's 39th Annual Meeting Dec. 11th. Submission deadline: 10/10/08*

• *CCPA's Children's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division met with Commissioner Susan Hamilton and Chief of Staff Karl Kemper on Sept. 9th to provide feedback on DCF's strategic planning process.*

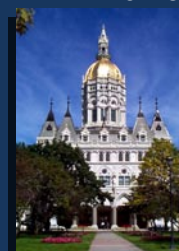
• *CCPA has been invited to participate in DCF's Stakeholder Workgroup on their new Programs and Services Data Collection and Reporting System*

• *CCPA's Developmental Disabilities Division will be meeting with Christine Pollio, Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at DDS on Sept. 23rd*

• *CCPA's Behavioral Health Division will meet with the Legislative Program Review and Investigation Committee on Sept. 25th about their study on state substance abuse treatment for adults*

Make sure your voice is heard this upcoming legislative session:

Join CCPA today!



Contact
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Updated Consumer Price Index Charts

CCPA has updated our charts on the Consumer Price Index and how it compares to annual COLA increases.

Over the past twenty years, CPI has grown an average of 3.1% annually, while COLA growth trails behind at 1.1% annual growth. From 1987 to 2008, the CPI has increased 95.4%, while COLA has only increased 29.3%. These figures are truly disheartening and will be part of our focus in the upcoming legislative session in January.

Medical CPI has grown even more exponentially, at a rate of 5.2% annually, and a twenty-year increase of 197.2%.

This analysis will be useful as we approach this year's legislative session amidst a very bleak economic forecast. *(A special thanks to Bob Bowsza, Director of Administration and Finance at HARC, for his help with these calculations.)*

Reflection and Review

A Look Back at 2008, Ahead at 2009

In the 2008 session, for the first time in recent history, the Legislature and the Governor chose to leave the second year of a two-year budget untouched.

Community providers were recognized by the news media and elected leaders as being short-changed by the process. The \$3.5 million allocated just a few weeks ago to private providers for energy costs is a strong—early signal—that community provider issues will be a top agenda item in the next session. We are on the list of “unfinished business” that must be addressed.

Thank you to all who have fostered relationships at the local level and assured that your delegation continues to fight for our services.

Next year's budget is already projected at a deficit of \$145 million. The Governor communicated to legislative leaders that she will not allow them to raise taxes in order to avoid cutting programs. All state agencies must submit a 10% reduction package to OPM.

Save the Date!

Dec. 11, 2008: CCPA Annual Meeting
Jan 7, 2009: New Legislative Session Begins



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Top 10 Cost-Saving Strategies for Private Providers

1. Use fleet or business credit cards for fuel
2. Find out if your agency qualifies for excise fuel tax exemption
3. Find out if your vehicles qualify for fuel tax refund
4. Apply for energy audits
5. Become an EnergyStar partner
6. Shop at wholesale clubs, some of which have special savings for non-profit community providers
7. Research vendors to help manage and negotiate telecommunications needs
8. Qualify clients for food stamps
9. Use GPS tracking systems
10. Apply for a one-time allocation for client clothing

Contact Ashley Sales, Coordinator for Public Policy and Programs, at (860) 257-7909 or at asales@ccpa-inc.org for more details.

CCPA Public Policy Summit

The CCPA Public Policy Summit took place on September 10th at the New Haven Lawn Club.



CCPA Members enjoy breakfast at the Policy Summit on September 10th at the New Haven Lawn Club

Members conducted a “SWOT” analysis of CCPA's Public Policy, detailing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for CCPA's public policy efforts. The most common strength identified was the knowledge, expertise, and visibility of CCPA staff and consultants. Members also recognize the power and credibility CCPA has as a voice for the community provider system.

CCPA thanks all who participated. We will use feedback and suggestions from the Policy summit to craft an agenda and strategy through our Public Policy/Community Provider Initiative Steering Committee. We welcome all interested members to join the Steering Committee. Please contact Alyssa Goduti, Vice President for Public Policy, at (860) 257-7909 or at agoduti@ccpa-inc.org for more details.