Office of the Healthcare Advocate

A Valuable State Resource Ready to Serve You

Questions about health insurance? Having a problem with a health insurance company? The Office of the Healthcare Advocate provides Connecticut residents with information about consumer rights and will advocate on your behalf to effectively resolve managed care problems in a timely manner.

You can contact the Office of the Healthcare Advocate by calling 1-866-HMO-4446 (toll-free) or (860) 297-3980. Calls are normally returned the same business day.

Curbing the Illegal Use of Handicapped Parking Spaces

To crack down on the illegal use of handicapped parking spaces, a new law increases the fine for violating the law from a previous minimum fine of $85 to $150 for the first violation and $250 for each subsequent violation.

Violations include illegal parking in a handicapped spot, unauthorized display of handicapped parking pass, failure to return a pass when required by the DMV, and failure to provide designated parking spaces for handicapped persons. PA 07-52

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
Permit No. 3937

Legislative Office Building
Room 1800
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
ROBERTA.WILLIS@CGA.CT.GOV
1-800-842-8267

State Representative
Roberta Willis
64th District

Cornwall
Goshen
Salisbury
Sharon
Torrington

State Representative

Roberta Willis

Senior Update 2007

News You Can Use

Home Care For Seniors

Independent Living

The legislature realizes that with a little help many seniors can remain at home. The Connecticut Home Care Trust Fund, administered by the Comptroller, allows people to set up individual savings accounts for costs not covered by insurance. This will let more seniors stay home or in a non-institutional setting.

Interest on the account is exempt from the state income tax, and withdrawals can be made to cover care expenses such as chores, companion services, meals, and transportation. Seniors can even hire their own personal care assistants. The program is in development and will be ready mid-2008. For the latest news, please call (860) 702-3300 or visit the Comptroller at www.osc.state.ct.us.

Taking Medicaid Home

Connecticut has received the federal "Money Follows the Person" grant. The $24.2 million grant, supervised by the Department of Social Services, will span five years and allow Medicaid to pay for home care for 700 people with disabilities who are 18 and older and who choose to live in their own home, a family home, an apartment, or congregate housing such as assisted living. When people are in need, they ought to have the choice to receive care in their own homes as an alternative to institutional care. The start date is awaiting federal approval. To get the latest news and updates, please contact the Department of Social Services at 1-800-842-1508 or visit www.CT.gov/DSS.

Questions? Concerns?

Representative Roberta Willis

1-800-842-8267

The Vet Express

The Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs has recently begun a new mobile veterans' service program called the "Vet Express." The Vet Express is a new van equipped to file claims for veteran's benefits as well as provide general information. The van is handicapped-accessible. The Vet Express visits convenient locations and no appointment is needed. For more information, please contact the DVA at (860) 721-5826.

Vet Express Stops in Our Area

3RD Tuesday of Every Month
From 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Connecticut Works
486 Winsted Road
Torrington, CT 06790

Last Friday of Every Month
From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Winchester/Winsted Town Hall
338 Main Street
Winsted, CT 06098

Help For Seniors

- ***Are you 60 years of age or older?***
- ***Are you a caregiver for a family member who is 60 or older, or suffering from dementia?***
- ***Do you have questions about Medicare and related insurance?***
- ***Could you use help caring for your spouse or parents?***

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging has trained staff to help you with questions about Medicare, supplemental insurance, ConnPACE prescription drug insurance, Medicare Part D prescription cards, and Medicaid. They also have information on things like housing, transportation, nutrition programs, healthcare directives, keeping your affairs in order, and veterans' benefits.

WCAAA can help families caring for a person 60 or older, or who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. With funding through the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Statewide Respite Care Program, or their private Care Management Program, they can arrange for respite care to give caregivers a much needed break. They can sometimes help pay for medically necessary items not covered by Medicare or other insurance.

Call them with your questions related to aging or caregiving. They'll either help you directly or refer you to other appropriate programs ready to help. Contact WCAAA at 1-800-994-9422 or at www.wcaaa.org. Help is just a call or click away!