



Texas Parent to Parent

Providing support and information for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other health care needs

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Inside this issue:

- ♥**From Our Families:** How to Hire a Care provider - see page 2
- ♥**Around the State:** Online survey on food, physical exercise & screen time - See page 4
- ♥**Around the State:** Federal Law on Citizenship for Medicaid - see page 5
- ♥**Self-Determination:** Who's Driving the Bus - see page 5
- ♥**Program Update:** Supporting Parent Volunteer Training Schedule - see page 6
- ♥**Around the State:** Consumer Directed Services - HCS/TxHML - See page 7
- ♥**Around the State:** Emergency Planning - See page 7

Help TxP2P by using our Randall's Good Neighbor Remarkable Card Number 10043!

We hope your holidays are fun, safe, and relaxing and that your new year is THE BEST EVER!!



from the Staff and Board of Directors of Texas Parent to Parent!

Changes are Coming to Medicaid - The STAR+PLUS expansion is only months

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is expanding STAR+PLUS to four new major service areas effective the first of 2007. The following information is intended to help you decide if these changes will affect you, your family member, or members of your organization. STAR+PLUS is a managed care program that combines Medicaid acute medical care with Medicaid community long term services and supports. Services are provided by the managed care companies known as

"health plans." There will be at least two health plans providing services in each of the new service areas. The STAR+PLUS expansion will affect most individuals in the expansion areas who receive Medicaid and are SSI eligible. The new service areas include the Travis, Nueces, and Bexar areas, as well as the counties surrounding Harris County (Harris County already has STAR+PLUS). For a complete list of all affected counties, please check the STAR+PLUS website www.hhsc.state.tx.us/starplus/

starplus.htm Many individuals in these services areas will experience changes in how they receive their health and community long term services and supports. Adults over the age of 21 who are SSI eligible are *required* to enroll in STAR+PLUS to receive services. Children under the age of 21 are considered voluntary and can choose to enroll in STAR+PLUS or remain in traditional fee for service Medicaid. There are a few exceptions however. Individuals

Continued on Page 2

Save the Dates!

June 7th, 2007 - Wrightslaw Pre-Conference with Pete & Pam Wright
June 8th and 9th, 2007
Texas Parent to Parent 3rd Annual Parent Conference
Omni Southpark, Austin, TX

Watch for more information on www.txp2p.org; registration begins in March 2007

Changes are Coming to Medicaid

Continued from Page 1

residing in institutions (nursing facilities, ICFsMR, or state schools) and individuals receiving Medicaid waiver services *other than CBA* (Community Based Alternatives) are excluded from STAR+PLUS.

Eligible individuals were mailed enrollment packets from the Health and Human Services Commission over the past few weeks. The enrollment packets provide all the information on how to enroll. Texas Access Alliance is the enrollment broker for HHSC and will be contacting individuals who do not return the enrollment forms.

Individuals currently receiving CBA Services have until mid-December to select the health plan they want to use. If they do not voluntarily select a plan, they will be automatically enrolled in a health plan as soon as the new services are up and running. Other eligible individuals who are not currently receiving CBA services will have until mid-February to submit their enrollment forms. If they do not voluntarily select a plan, they will be assigned a health plan as of March 1st, 2007. Members will be allowed to change health plans.

Services and supports will not be cut off as of the start-up date. The health plans have up to 90 days to contact those currently receiving long term services and supports (CBA or Primary Home Care services) to perform an assessment and put a new plan in place if necessary. Until a new plan is in place, current services will continue.

One of the most significant benefits of STAR+PLUS is how it will affect individuals on the CBA waiting list. All individuals on the CBA waiver waiting list, *who are SSI eligible*, will be eligible to be assessed for

long term services and supports as soon as the new services are up and running. If they meet CBA eligibility criteria, they will receive the appropriate services and will come off of the CBA waiting list. Individuals on the waiting list who are not SSI eligible (MAOs, those between 100% and 300% of SSI), will remain on the waiting list until a waiver slot becomes available.

There are a lot of complexities around the STAR+PLUS expansion. The Health and Human Services Commission has contracted with the Texas Center for Disability Studies to perform outreach and community trainings. The Center has partnered with two local/community organizations in each expansion region to assist with outreach efforts. The local educational meetings are intended to help individuals, families and advocates understand the changes, provide information on how to select a health plan, and answer questions on the enrollment process. If you or a group of individuals (large or small) who would like to

Several changes in dates occurred shortly after this article was written - for updated information, please visit the STAR+PLUS website at <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/starplus/starplus.htm>

participate in one of the STAR+PLUS community education meetings, please contact Kaye Beneke at kaye@beneketx.com.

There are some important things parents of children with disabilities should consider when deciding whether to enroll their children into STAR+PLUS. First, if keeping your child's current providers is impor-

tant to you, it is vital that you find out if your child's current providers are part of the health plan's network. You can check the enrollment packet listings, but it is better to call the health plan as the networks have changed since the packets were printed. However, if you are currently having trouble finding providers who will accept Medicaid patients, STAR+PLUS may be a good choice as the health plans are required to ensure that an adequate network of willing providers exists. Finally, if your child's needs are so complex that service coordination if helpful, this service will only be offered through the STAR+PLUS model as Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) will no longer be available in the new STAR+PLUS service areas. PCCM will continue to be available in areas that do not have STAR+PLUS. If service coordination is not useful or necessary, it may be better for your child to remain in the fee for service program and keep your current providers. The point is, this is an important decision and you need to do your homework.

There has been some confusion due to the fact that some individuals currently enrolled in Medicaid waiver programs *other than CBA* received enrollment letters and packets from the Health and Human Services Commission. These letters were sent in error. Individuals receiving services through other waivers are not eligible to enroll in STAR+PLUS and should not have received those letters.

The changes are vast and fairly complex. If you have questions, please contact me at colleen.horton@mail.utexas.edu

How to Hire a Care Provider for your Child/Young Adult - Tips from a Parent who has been Employing Helpers for Years

by Rosemary Alexander, TxP2P

Sooner or later, many parents of children and young adults with disabilities need to find a care provider. It might be a babysitter for a Saturday night out, a respite provider to stay a weekend with your child while you go to your high school reunion, an after-school childcare provider, or after graduation, an attendant to assist your young person with his or her daily activities. It's not easy to find someone you

like and trust, then train them and keep them as your employee. You probably think of yourself as a parent, not an employer—but when you hire an attendant, you become an employer! Here are some ideas for carrying out this new job.

First, you have to realize you need help! For some of us, this is an easy step or a necessity, but every parent is on his or her own time-line for letting go. I remember well the

first steps I took to allow someone else to care for our son Will (who is now 24!), besides the occasional sitter.

My husband was offered a chance to teach a 2-week class in Finland and our way would be paid. I really wanted to do it but Will was only 8 and I couldn't imagine leaving him for 2 weeks. Taking Will was out of the question, because of the long

Continued on Page 3

How to Hire a Care Provider for your Child/Young Adult

Continued from Page 2

flight, his seizure disorder and the demands of his care. Then I found a nurse who was a good friend of a friend who agreed to live in our home for 2 weeks. It was a huge success and gave me the courage to leave him with someone occasionally. The next step was when my second son began to become pretty independent, when the boys were around 10 and 12. Then Will's basic care seemed overwhelming, compared to my other son's self-sufficiency. My husband and I were miserable by the end of every weekend, bickering over who should change his diaper or help him eat. So I found a nice guy, again the relative of a friend, who came over every Saturday from 1-5pm and gave us a break. Just having someone regular and a time that I could anticipate was a life saver—and a marriage saver. We decided that time off from Will's care was more important than buying a new car. And so it has gone, with Will going to Camp CAMP, spending weekends in a care provider's home, to the present when he has attendant care everyday paid for by CLASS (Medicaid Waiver Program).

So assuming you are ready and eager to find someone to help you out, how do you get started? First, you have to locate people who would be interested in a part-time job and have the skills, experience and heart for working with someone with a disability. Think about what skills are required to care for your child or young adult, but remember that the willingness to learn might serve as well as previous experience. I have found several very able attendants for my son who had no experience with disabilities but were good and able people, ready to learn.

Where to find people:

- your own network of friends, relatives and acquaintances; tell everyone you know that you are looking for someone and you might find someone's cousin, sister, daughter, son, or friend who is interested
- staff in special education programs in public schools
- students at local universities and junior colleges, particularly students majoring in education, social work, nursing, health and human services, OT, PT, etc.
- the Internet, such as www.craigslist.com or www.attendantnetwork.com

www.craigslist.com or www.attendantnetwork.com

• bulletin boards in high traffic areas such as grocery stores, banks, community centers, churches

• local employment offices or rehabilitation agencies

• Local agencies or

• service organizations, non-profits

• local newspaper ads

• newsletters for neighborhoods, churches, parent organizations, community organizations

You will often need an ad of some kind to recruit potential employees.

Try to be realistic about the job requirements yet also make the job attractive.

Start with the necessities, such as the hours and days of the week, a basic job description, the pay rate, if the person must drive, etc.

But if there is room, perhaps you can also mention the benefits of the job, such as what's fun about the job or how the job will provide new opportunities to grow and learn.

Don't include your name or address or other private information, just how to respond through a phone number or email address.

One friend of mine has a website about her son where a potential employee can read a bit about the job and her son's disability and decide at that point whether to pursue the job.

Let's suppose that you have gone through the search process and have found someone that you might hire. What's next? You might start with a phone interview that will screen out those that just won't work.

Give more detail about the job (you have to change diapers!) and see if they are still interested.

Ask a few questions to see if you are still interested in them, such as what's your experience, do you have reliable transportation, do you smoke, are you allergic to pets (if you have pets in your home).

If things seem promising, set up an interview or tell them you'll call back with an interview time and place, giving yourself time to think about it or compare them to others who might call.

Even if you can't use this person at this time, keep the name and number for future reference.

Your next step depends on what you know about the possible employee.

If the person is your best friend's daughter, the process can be more informal. If this is a stranger who emailed you from Craig's List, you should proceed with caution. The interview can occur in your home or if you are feeling careful, in a neutral place. Prepare for the interview by writing down a job description and the questions you want to be sure to ask. Try to make the person feel comfortable and get to know them a bit. Ask the person to tell you about themselves, what experience they'd had, why they want the job. Tell them about the job and about your child. Give the person time to ask questions. Know what you are looking for and ask yourself if this person fits your needs. Try to picture this person with your child—would your child feel safe and happy? Would you feel comfortable leaving your child with this person?

Another issue is when you introduce the person to your child, immediately or after your interview?

Again, if you are feeling cautious, wait until you've checked out the person.

Be sure you deal with the business end of the job. Talk about money: what the rate is, how often they will be paid, if you will reimburse them for mileage and food or other items they may provide for your child.

Write down how to reach them and other basic facts, such as references. Get permission to do a criminal background check; for a background check you'll need their full name and date of birth.

Be sure to do the follow-up: call references and do a criminal background check. To do the check, go to www.txdps.state.tx.us/ then select *online services*, then *conviction records*. You will need to create a new account or sign in with your user id and password. Each search costs \$3.75. You enter the name and date of birth and then the results will appear. What you want to see is NO Matching Records; that means the person does not show up in the criminal data base. Amazing what you can do through the internet!

Once you've hired someone, you have to get them ready to work. Here are some ideas for orientation

Continued on Page 4

How to Hire a Care Provider for your Child/Young Adult

Continued from Page 3

and training:

- Make sure this person has CPR and First Aid training. You might
 - Offer to pay for the training as an incentive to take on the job.
 - Spend time with the new employee; give them a written schedule, procedures, and contact information for both of you.
 - Be sure they understand your expectations and how to communicate with you.
 - Be sure they know techniques for handling your child's behavior, communication methods and other essentials for your child's care.
 - Link the new person with another person already doing the job so the new person can gain on-the-job training.
 - Define the first month as a trial period and then talk at the end of the month about whether the job is working out for each of you.
 - Check in often to make sure the new employee understands the job and has a chance to ask questions and get further training.
- If you feel uncomfortable leaving your child alone with a new person, let go gradually. At first, stay at home but remain in another room and leave the new employee nearby with your child. Then leave home but stay close to home so you could return quickly; stay away only for an hour or so. Gradually extend the length of time you are gone and how far away

We as parent-employers are sometimes in a tough spot, because this is not an ordinary working relationship.

you go. Build trust gradually.

If you like the new person and they are doing the job well, you will probably want to keep them working for you as long as possible. You will need to nurture and monitor the working relationship. Here are some guidelines:

- Do an occasional evaluation or assessment where both you and your employee talk about what's going on, what's working well and not working well; give the employee a chance to talk.
- If you are in a program that requires a formal evaluation, (the CLASS program, for example), tell the employee several months ahead of time what the evaluation will be based on.
- Give a bonus or gift at holiday time.
- Give a bonus for staying and/or doing a good job.
- Have occasional gatherings for your employees (if you have more than one) to talk, work on schedules, eat and enjoy time together. Work to build a team.
- Provide your employee with the expertise and equipment to do a good job.
- Use a log book for each employee to record what went on during their time with your child or adult and ask the person to write in it every day. Your attitude toward the employee makes a big difference. To retain an employee, you must always be respectful of this person. Never yell at them, berate them, or be overly critical. If you have to confront the employee with negative feedback,

think first about how to present it. Communicate your thoughts privately, never in public; don't attack the person but rather comment on the behavior; tell them how to remedy the problem and what you want them to do instead of what they are doing.

We as parent-employers are sometimes in a tough spot, because this is not an ordinary working relationship. This employee may be in your home and may bathe your child, dress and feed him, entertain him. The employee gets to know your child, home and family in a close way. You may see your child as very vulnerable and you are trusting this person to care for him or her with love and respect. You may end up developing a strong relationship with the employee, even a real friendship. Yet you are also the employer. It's sometimes hard to point out to a friend when he or she is not doing what you require for a job. Somehow you have to maintain a balance between being positive, approachable, concerned, respectful, yet still able to discuss the job requirements objectively; you have to be able to talk about money, performance, or failures. It's a delicate balance and takes practice. You learn the skills as you go to be an effective employer. Putting the time and energy into being a good employer is worth it: you will get the help you need to provide quality care for your child or young adult. Learn to share with another person the joys and challenges of parenting a person with a disability!

Parents of Children with Special Health Care Needs:

Take an Online Survey

The Family Voices and Tufts University research team invites parents of children (ages 6-18) with special health care needs (CSHCN) (including special mental health/behavioral/emotional needs) to complete an anonymous online survey. The survey aims to learn how fami-

lies promote health and wellness for CSHCN regarding food choices, physical activity, and screen time (TV and computers). The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and must be completed in one sitting. The results will be shared with health professionals, government

agencies, other families, and researchers to help them support healthier lifestyles for CSHCN. The survey will be available online until December 31, 2006.

<http://go.tufts.edu/familymatters>



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New Federal Law Requires Medicaid Clients to Prove Citizenship

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will begin verifying the citizenship and identity of people applying for or receiving Medicaid to comply with a new federal law that takes effect July 1, 2007. The Federal Deficit Reduction Act, passed earlier this year, does not change who is eligible to receive services, but the new law does require states to verify the citizenship or immigration status of all Medicaid clients.

"In implementing this new federal law, we have looked for ways to make the process as simple as possible for our clients while fully satisfying the new requirement," said Albert Hawkins, Texas Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner.



Picture your child's life as a "bus." Who's driving? Is it you or your child?

Where is the bus going? Who chose the route, the destination, the speed? Who are the passengers? What about side trips along the way? (You know that side trips often enrich the journey!)

Of course, you realize that my "bus" scenario is really just a metaphor for self-determination, right? When Jake was much younger, his father and I "drove the bus" for him, but for several years, we've taken on different roles as Jake's ability to drive his own bus has grown. In earlier years, because of his age and issues arising from his disability, we made decisions for Jake without consulting him. We did this with his best interests at heart, and with the hope (and intent) that he would be able to take over the decision-making process on his own behalf. Our vision of success is of Jake driving his own bus.

As parents of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other health care needs, we find ourselves in the position of having to make decisions and plans for a child who may not be able to completely comprehend what's going on at the time or communicate their needs or desires. While they're in school and until they reach age 18, we're seen as our child's legal represen-

Hawkins said the state already has the required proof for many Medicaid clients or will be able to access the information directly. For example, children need only a birth certificate to comply. For children born in Texas, HHSC may be able to get the birth certificate electronically, and the parents will not need to provide it.

For those applying for Medicaid for their children, the state needs proof of citizenship only for the child - not for the parents. And Medicaid clients who also receive Medicare or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will not need to provide additional documents because their citizenship was verified as part of the enrollment process for those programs.

Legal immigrants who may be eligible for Medicaid will continue to provide proof of legal status and identity as they have in the past. Current Medicaid clients will be asked to comply with the new requirement the next time they renew their benefits. The state sent a letter to clients in June explaining the requirement and will send additional reminders in client renewal packets.

More information about the new law, including a list of documents that can be used to prove citizenship and identity, is available at www.hhs.state.tx.us. Consumers with questions about the requirement can call 2-1-1.

Who's Driving the Bus?

Jeanine Pinner, Training & Outreach Coordinator, TxP2P

tative, and we're empowered with the awesome responsibility of making decisions about their school plan and their involvement in the community. We do this year after year, gathering information and skills along the way. We get used to "driving the bus," and hopefully, we've gotten pretty good at it.

When our children reach age 18, what happens? They've reached "adult" status and are now supposed to "drive" their own buses, right?

Are they ready??? Do they have any experience making their own choices about the direction of their lives?

Here are a few basic scenarios to consider:

"Sam's parents have made all of the decisions for Sam until now. Sam recently turned 18, and all of a sudden, he has some control over his life and he's loving it. He doesn't have any experience making his own decisions, and is making bad choices. Since he's 18 now, he has control over whether his parents are invited to his ARD, and he has chosen to exclude them..."

"Jane is 18 now, but relies completely on her mom to tell her what to do. She is a very capable person, but has no experience making her own decisions and lacks confidence in her ability to choose for herself..."

"Sally is 18 and about to graduate from high school. Her parents are completely supportive of Sally's efforts and desire to take charge of her life and make her own decisions. They started very late in helping Sally learn how to 'drive her [own] bus' and they still need more time . . . she's not ready to do this on her own!"

How can we help prepare our children to drive their own buses and when should we start? There are many opportunities each day for our children to exercise their choice-making skills; those opportunities exist for every age and level of ability. It may be about food, entertainment, clothing . . . it might be attending or facilitating their own ARD meetings . . . it's an opportunity for a person to have a little bit of control over his or her own little corner of the world. It's also an opportunity to experience the outcomes or consequences of choice-making.

What if they fail???

I've always learned more from my failures than from my successes, so I don't see "failure" as a completely negative experience. Don't we owe it to our children to provide them with opportunities to learn how to make responsible choices (and that includes opportunities to "fail" in "safe" environments like home and school)?

Continued on page 6

Who's Driving the Bus?

Shouldn't they have opportunities to express (and act on) their dreams for their future?

When Jake told me he was going to take French as an elective in his freshman year in high school, I said something like, "Don't you think you should take Spanish? We live in Texas and knowing Spanish would be a really good thing." He said, "No, I am taking French." So, I told him (after listening to the little voice in the back of my brain) that it was his choice and we'd see how things were going at the end of the first six weeks grading period. Guess what? He made a "B"! He loves languages and I know that he'll continue on his quest to learn as many languages as possible.

Does this mean that I've backed completely out of the picture and let him do whatever he wants? NO! My role has changed, though, and my support and guidance "look" different than they did a few years ago.

When Jake chooses to sleep until 20 minutes before the school bus arrives, it aggravates me because I don't like rushed mornings. As long as he completes the required morning routine (shower, hair, food, etc.) though, I'm not going to require him to get up earlier. If he pushes it too far and starts to miss the bus, it will become a "teachable moment" and we'll be working *together* to design a new morning schedule!

Jake is in the "driver's seat" now, and his choice-making skills are pretty impressive! I'm usually right behind the driver's seat carefully watching and trying not to give too many directions and instructions (picture me as "insurance"). Before long, I'll be able to just ride along, perhaps taking a nap or reading a book in the back of the bus. I'll know Jake is on the road to success when he is able to take a trip with-

out us (and doesn't run over anyone or anything!).

Many happy driving experiences to you and yours! Read on for a few more ideas about promoting and supporting self-determination...

"We are all interdependent. No man is an island unto himself. We need each other. When we are fortunate enough to have an opportunity to provide selfless assistance, not only is the other person helped, we are too. We come away changed, feeling good about ourselves and what we have done." (1) (Wilkins)

Things to Consider:

If



you're not "driving the bus," does that mean you're out of a job? NO! Use those advocacy skills you worked so hard to develop by becoming a leader in advocacy:

- Work with others to help your child's school and other services provide the best for all children
- Share your experiences and knowledge about your son's or daughter's dreams and needs
- Serve on school or agency committees involved with students
- Become a member of advisory boards or councils dealing with young people's issues
- Testify on educational and youth disability issues before school boards, city, county and state legislative bodies

•More Things to Consider (2) (Pacer, 2002):

Do I try too hard to sway my child's decisions?

Do I tend to speak *for* my child instead of letting him speak for himself?

Continued from Page 5

Can I separate my own desires from my child's wishes?

How You Can Nurture Self-Determination(3) (Ca. DOE, 2001)

Allow your daughter/son to "grow" (take risks, safe experiences) and try out new things

Recognize that all young people will make mistakes and change their minds before settling on a definite path

Learn how to assist or let your son or daughter to advocate for himself or herself

Know when to "step back" or when to "step in" without taking over

Help your son or daughter feel good about himself/herself and to understand his or her disability

Emphasize what she or he can do -- celebrate accomplishments

Your own family's religious beliefs and cultural values provide opportunities for learning

What's at risk if we fail to equip our children with the skills and education they need to face the future? (Ca. DOE, 2001)

- Chronic unemployment and underemployment
- Social and emotional difficulties
- Deprivation of economic self-sufficiency and related benefits (social security, medical retirement)
- Susceptibility to changing economic conditions
- Dependence on public support

(1) Dan Wilkins, *It's a Human Thing. Or, Some Things I Learned on the Way to Becoming a Human Service Provider and Self-Advocate*

2) Parent Brief April 2002 PACER Center

(3) California Department of Education - 2001, *Transition to Adult Living: A Guide for Secondary Education*

TxP2P SUPPORTING PARENT TRAINING 2007 SCHEDULE

The heart of parent-to-parent support is the parent volunteers who step forward to provide information and emotional support to a new parent or a parent new to a disability or issue related to the disability, chronic illness, or other special health care need. Are you interested in helping?

The training prepares you to provide support to another parent. We will

discuss grief and the stages that most parents experience, listening skills, local, state and national resources, what TxP2P expects of their volunteers, and care for the caregiver. We work hard but we also have lots of food and laughs. We'll have child care available if you need it. The schedule is below:

Austin: January 20

Amarillo: February (date to be an-

nounced)

San Antonio: March 3

Harlingen: April 14

Austin: April 28

Corpus Christi: July 28

Weslaco: August 25

Houston: September 15

Dallas: October 13

Contact Patty Geisinger at

Patty@txp2p.org or 866-896-6001 if you want to join us.

Consumer Directed Services are coming to Home & Community-based Services (HCS) & Texas Home Living Waivers (TxHmL)!!

By Colleen Horton, Texas Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin

After a very long wait, opportunities for self-direction are being added to the HCS and TxHmL waivers. This will give individuals and families more opportunities to select who they want to come into their homes and into their lives. It will allow individuals and families to hire, train, and supervise the habilitation attendants and respite providers that provide the services people use the most.

Consumer Directed Services has been available in other waivers for several years. For many individuals, it has been the key that opens the door to self-determination. While CDS is not for everyone (rest assured, the agency model will still be available), it does provide more freedom and choice than has previously been available.

Here are the basics...

CDS is not a new service, it is a new *service option*. It's a way that services can be delivered to you or your

family member. Under the current system, if an individual receives HCS services, they must use an HCS provider agency who hires, trains, supervises, and decides when it's appropriate to fire respite and habilitation providers. This means that you do not always know who's coming into your home and you don't always have the control you would like because the individual does not work for you.

Under the CDS model, the individual works for you. The individual or the individual's parent (if under 21) becomes the employer of record. With the help of a fiscal intermediary who is paid through your waiver budget, you can begin to control your life and be the boss. The fiscal intermediary takes responsibility for the administrative burdens such as payroll, tax filings, etc. You take responsibility for interviewing, deciding who will provide the services you need, training the individual you hire to provide the services, and supervising the em-

ployee. One of the benefits of the CDS program is that it will allow you to pay your employee more than they typically receive under the standard agency model. As I'm sure you know, the more money that can be paid to the often under-paid direct care worker (attendant) the happier the employee. Obviously, this can provide significant opportunities for improved quality of services.

The expansion of CDS to the HCS and TxHmL waivers is expected to begin in March, 2007. The Department on Aging and Disability Services (DADS) will be developing and distributing information and training materials to help you make your decision. The best information, however, can be obtained by talking to other individuals and families who have been using the CDS option to see how it has worked for them.

This is definitely worth checking out!

Emergency & Disaster Planning for Children with Special Health Care Needs

Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program wants to help you prepare for emergencies. They have created a booklet that will help you plan for emergencies and disasters. It includes lists of supplies you will need. It also has lists of help for you in the community and on the Internet. You can find this booklet at http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn/pdf/emer_plan.pdf or contact CSHCN at their toll-free number, 800-252-8023, and ask for the booklet.

There is an Emergency Information Form in the middle of the booklet created by the American College of Emergency Physicians. It will help you or your family member receive proper care in a disaster or emer-

gency. You can use this simple form to put together health information for your child with special health care needs. When you and your child's doctor complete the form, you should keep a copy in the various locations where your child might be, such as at home, the child care center or school, or with the babysitter, grandparents or other relatives, etc. In the case of emergency, the Emergency Information Form would be available if needed by doctors and emergency medical personnel.

This form also suggests that you consider registering your information with the MedicAlert® System. For

more information about that system and its enrollment, you may visit www.medicalert.org, call 800-ID-ALERT (800-432-5378, or email customer_service@medicalert.org.

There is a fee to use the MedicAlert® System. However, they offer "sponsorships" that pay the fee for applicants who submit their application with a letter, from a doctor, nurse, or social service agency, which verifies that they cannot pay the fee.

Please do not consider this an endorsement of the MedicAlert® System by DSHS, CSHCN, or TxP2P - we mention it for informational purposes only.



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Serving children with disabilities,
 chronic illness and other special needs
 by providing support and information to
 their families through peer support,
 resource referral and public awareness.

Conference Schedule

Date	Conference Title	Location	Registration Information
Friday, January 26 to Sunday, January 29, 2007	Abilities Expo - Texas	Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX	Questex Media Group, Inc. 757 Third Ave., 5th Floor New York, NY 10018 Toll-Free: 800-385-3085 E-mail: abilities@questex.com http://tex.abilitiesexpo.com/iaetex/v42/index.cvn?id=10000
Wednesday, February 28 to Saturday, March 3, 2007	Inclusion Works! 14th Annual Conference	Renaissance Austin Hotel Austin, TX	The Arc of Texas 8001 Centre Park Drive Austin, TX 78754 Phone: (512) 454-6694 Toll-Free: 1-800-252-9729 http://www.thearcoftexas.org/conferences/inclusionworks.asp
Wednesday, February 28 to Friday, March 2, 2007	Texas Transition Institute	College Station Hilton College Station, TX	Cheryl Grenwelge Texas Transition Institute Department of Educational Psychology Texas A&M University, 4225 TAMU College Station, TX 77843-4225 Phone: (979) 458-1593 E-mail: cgrenwelge@neo.tamu.edu http://tti.cehd.tamu.edu
Valentine's Day, Wednesday, February 14, 2007	Capitol Day 2007 The Heart of the Matter	South Steps of the State Capitol Austin, TX Lunch will be provided	The Arc of Texas 8001 Centre Park Drive Austin, TX 78754 Phone: (512) 454-6694 Toll-Free: 1-800-252-9729 http://www.thearcoftexas.org/
Monday, March 12, 2007	Texas Families Unite Rally	State Capitol Austin, TX	More information to follow or contact txpacs-subscribe@yahoogle.com to join the listserv to learn more