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OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

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Steps to Making a More Positive You...

Make enthusiasm your daily exercise. Be joyful and expectant.



OIL CAMP PLEA APPLICATIONS

On May 1st we will begin accepting Camp PLEA applications for individuals with disabilities. If you have a child with a disability, aged 8-17, or are an adult with a disability, 18 or over, summer camp is here!

If you would like to have three fun-filled days and nights of swimming, bowling, fishing, dancing, crafts etc., this is for you. The children's overnight camp will be held on June 4th, 5th, & 6th and the adult overnight camp is June 11th, 12th, & 13th. The camps (day camps available) are free and insurance can be purchased for a \$5 fee.

You can come by the OIL office for an application or call and request one be sent by snail mail, faxed, or e-mailed to you. Keep in mind that if it is done by mail, it will slow the process and the slots fill quickly.

MEDICAL ALERT CARD FOR SCI

Spinal cord injured individuals (SCI) at T-6 and above often experience Autonomic Dysreflexia. Autonomic Dysreflexia can be life threatening. It can result in seizures or CVA due to high blood pressure. Symptoms are profuse sweating, pounding headache, high blood pressure. The individual may also have an increased pulse, bradycardia, seizures. This medical card tells you the causes of Autonomic

Dysreflexia and the treatment until you can reach medical attention if needed. The card should be carried in your wallet so if you are incapacitated and unable to tell them yourself, it will inform them. Hospital personnel are many times unaware of this condition that can be simply solved if people are made aware of it. In general, people with spinal cord injuries have a blood pressure that is much lower than the average person. So when your blood pressure rises to a very increased level for you, the emergency response people think it is barely elevated. It is also a good idea to carry information stating your average blood pressure so they can gauge the increased blood pressure reading.

If you have the need for an Autonomic Dysreflexia card, call Leanna at OIL and I will mail one to you.

ADVOCATES ALARMED BY PROPOSAL TO TWEAK SSI

A plan expected to be included in the President's budget proposal could change how Social Security benefits are calculated for people with disabilities. The president is

reportedly set to include a proposal to change the way that annual cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security benefits are figured in the coming years. The plan is said to be a compromise in exchange for Republicans agreeing to new taxes in efforts to reduce the nation's deficit.

The Social Security change known as "chained CPI" would have the effect of reducing the increases that Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries typically receive year-over-year to account for inflation.

The idea behind chained CPI is that people can make small sacrifices to account for rising costs, opting to buy hamburgers instead of steak, for example.

But disability advocates are lining up against the approach, saying that it does not properly account for the true situation facing many people with disabilities who rely on Social Security benefits to meet basic food and housing costs. In a letter sent to Obama late last year, more than three dozen national disability organizations asked the president to oppose a switch to chained CPI calling Social Security benefits "already very modest."

"What we're concerned about is that beneficiaries would be forced to make very painful decisions, choosing to take medications or buy that bag of groceries," said T.J. Sutcliffe, a policy advocate at The Arc. "Cuts (under chained CPI) are cumulative so they start out low, but they add up quickly."

Under chained CPI, Sutcliffe said that beneficiaries would

likely see a 0.3 percent reduction to their cost-of-living adjustment on average in the first year as compared to the current method of calculation. Over about 30 years, the change would mean that a beneficiary would lose about one month's worth of benefits, she said.

NEW FEDERAL RULE REQUIRES INSURERS TO OFFER MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE

The White House administration recently issued a final rule defining "essential health benefits" that must be offered by most [health insurance](#) plans next year. Thirty-two million people will gain access to coverage of [mental health](#) care as a result.

[Health Care Reform and the Supreme Court \(Affordable Care Act\)](#)

The federal rule requires insurers to cover treatment of mental illnesses, behavioral disorders, [drug addiction](#) and [alcohol abuse](#), as well as other conditions.

In addition to the millions who would gain access to mental health care, Thirty million people who already have some mental health coverage will see improvements in benefits.

White House officials described the rule as a major expansion of coverage. In the past, they said nearly 20 percent of people buying insurance on their own did not have coverage for mental health services, and nearly one-third had no coverage for treatment of [substance abuse](#).

The rule requires insurers to cover benefits in 10 broad categories, including hospital

services, prescription drugs and maternity and newborn care. The partial standardization of benefits would make it easier for consumers to compare health plans.

In the market today, it is difficult for consumers to make well-informed choices because benefits, deductibles, co-payments and other features vary widely among competing health plans.

The rule says the new health insurance policies can be offered at four levels of coverage. Under the least generous policies, known as bronze plans, consumers will pay 40 percent of the costs of covered benefits, on average, and insurers will pay the rest. Under the most generous policies, known as platinum plans, consumers will pay 10 percent. The administration, however, declined to set a uniform national standard and allowed states to set many of the specific requirements.

Minimum benefits will vary from state to state, as each state will have a benchmark plan, reflecting coverage typically offered by employers. In more than 30 states, the benchmark, or standard, is an insurance plan offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

The rule limits the costs to consumers in several ways. For health plans offered in the small-group market, the deductible amount, paid by consumers before insurance kicks in, generally cannot exceed \$2,000 for individual coverage and \$4,000 for family coverage. Total out-of-pocket costs will also be subject to limits. If a health plan has a network of doctors and hospitals, consumers may be

required to pay more if they go outside the network.

The new rule generally applies to all health insurers offering coverage in the individual and small group markets. States will have primary responsibility for enforcing the standards. The government said it would step in if it found that a state was not doing an adequate job of protecting consumers.

Federal officials acknowledged that many policies sold in the individual insurance market did not cover all the services required in the new rule. The administration said that many small business health plans “meet or are close to meeting the coverage requirements.”

Under the rule, health plans must provide benefits that have not always been provided by commercial insurers. For example, insurers must cover [dental care](#) and vision services for children, as well as “habilitative services” to help people with disabilities keep or improve their skills.

ROCK RIDGE APARTMENTS UPDATE

Rock Ridge Apartments is being built by Accessible Spaces Incorporated. A fifteen unit accessible, affordable, apartment building for adults with physical disabilities in McAlester. Rock Ridge Apartments is being developed in cooperation with the Oklahomans for Independent Living (OIL). The anticipated HUD Permission to Occupy (PTO) remains on schedule for **late September or early October 2013.** OIL will keep you posted monthly on the status of the construction and the rent-up process and procedures. If you are interested in an application,

contact OIL for assistance. Stay tuned to the OIL Newsletter for further developments.



LOW IMPACT EXERCISE PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

OIL is having a “Sittercise” exercise class on the following dates. All exercises are focused on sitting while exercising. On Tuesdays, the classes are from 9:00-10:00 a.m. and Thursdays from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. They will be held on May 2,7,14,16. Please come and join in on the fun.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE SUMMER GAMES

The 2013 State Games will be held in Stillwater on May 8th, 9th, and 10th. The OIL FreeSpirits competed in the area games in March. The athletes that finished in first, second, or third place qualified to attend the state games. We wish you luck!

OIL HOT DOG PICNIC

The picnic will be at Chadick Park on Tuesday, May 14th, at 5:30 p.m. OIL will provide the hot dogs and drinks but **you are asked to bring potato chips or a packaged dessert to go with them.**



GAME DAY AT THE PARK

We will be playing board games at Chadick Park on Tuesday, May 28th. We will gather at 12:00 noon so if you would like to bring a sack lunch, we will begin play afterwards. If you have a favorite game, bring it!

Transportation

OIL provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area, Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30. A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$1 per pick up in McAlester and \$2 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

**Prices are subject to change.*



You can have the freedom that comes with living at home even though you have a long-term illness or disability. The Oklahoma Living Choice Project can help you move out of a nursing home and back into the community.

This project gives Oklahomans like you or your loved one more options to manage health care needs and adds more balance to the state’s long-term care system.

If you live in a nursing home and qualify for SoonerCare, then Living Choice may be able to help.

Contact any O.I.L. Case Manager for a referral to the Living Choice Project at (918) 426.6220v/tdd.

*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted						
MAY EVENTS						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am <u>Exercise</u>	3	4
5	6 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm <u>Men's Group</u> Fiesta Grille 5:00 pm	7 <u>Exercise</u> <u>Women's Gp.</u> Location - TBA 11am	8 <u>Special</u> <u>Olympics</u> <u>State Games</u>	9 <u>Special</u> <u>Olympics State</u> <u>Games</u>	10 <u>Special</u> <u>Olympics State</u> <u>Games</u>	11 <u>Saturday</u> <u>Transportation</u> 8 am
12	13	14 <u>Exercise</u> <u>OIL Social</u> Chadick Park 5:30 pm	15	16 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am <u>Exercise</u>	17	18
19	20 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	21	22	23	24	25 <u>Saturday</u> <u>Transportation</u> 8 am
26	27 OIL CLOSED for Memorial Day	28 <u>Game Day</u> Chadick Park 12 pm	29	30	31	
<p>*Low Impact Exercise Class meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 *Alzheimer's Support Group, 3rd Wed., 12:00 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 *Cancer Support Group, 3rd Thur., 1:00 p.m., The Van Buren House, 426-5600 *Diabetes Support Group, 1st Tue., 6:00 p.m., MRHC Wellness Ctr. Conf. Room, 421-8656 *For information on Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 *Bariatric Support Group, 2nd Tue., MRHC Wellness Ctr. Conf. Room, 5:30 p.m., 421-6600</p>						

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