

October 30, 2006

CHFS Hires New Worksite Wellness Coordinator

The timing couldn't have been better for Kris Hayslett, CHFS' new wellness coordinator.

Previously a stay-at-home mom and part-time employee at the University of Kentucky, Hayslett wanted to get back into the work she loved after her youngest child started school this year.

With a master's degree in health promotion from UK, Hayslett was pleased when she found and was offered the job of worksite wellness coordinator.

Hayslett will be responsible for the Cabinet's worksite wellness program that includes assisting CHFS and the Personnel Cabinet with creating wellness policies. She will also coordinate CHFS wellness activities with those in other cabinets as well as the Governor's wellness and physical activity program, Get Healthy Kentucky.

Hayslett, who started work here two weeks ago, is interested in getting to know CHFS staffers and hearing their ideas about what makes a good wellness program.

"I've talked to a lot of people and they're excited to see what we're going to do," said Hayslett.

"We are very excited to have Kris onboard," said Chris Corbin, executive director of the Office of Health Policy. "She will be a tremendous resource to our Cabinet as we work to provide staff with resources to promote the importance of wellness and awareness. CHFS is one of the first cabinets to have a full-time wellness coordinator, demonstrating our commitment to the wellness of our employees."

Hayslett, who also teaches group fitness classes at Gold's Gym in Lexington, said she knows it can be difficult for people to try to make time for fitness and healthy eating in their busy schedules.

But she offers encouraging advice to those who may be considering starting a fitness routine or diet.

"Start slowly and progress," she said, adding that if you don't see immediate results, don't give up. "If people hurt themselves because they start out too fast, it gives them an excuse to stop."

"Lots of times people think if they are going to get healthy they have to be walking or running or have to be on a machine," said Hayslett. "Pick something you like to do. You'll be more likely to do it often."

Hayslett lives in Lexington with her husband and two children.

Substance Abuse Services Get Big Lift

START program works to keep families together



State and matching grants totaling nearly \$1 million will be given to nine communities across the state for substance abuse services and early intervention programs.

The funding is for the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team (START) project, which will heighten awareness of the effects and dangers of substance abuse and its relationship to child abuse. The \$800,000 in state funding comes from the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' (CHFS).

The grant specifically provides in-home services for families at risk due to substance abuse and early intervention case management from local providers.

Governor Ernie Fletcher announced the program in Louisville last week, where a check for \$175,000 was presented to Louisville Metro government officials and community partners for their city's START program. Metro United Way also presented a \$75,000 matching grant.

Governor Fletcher praised the project and said community leaders will use the grants to help change the lives of children across the commonwealth.

Planning frequent visits between parents and children removed from their homes is one of the basic tenets of the START model.

CHFS Secretary Mark Birdwhistell said the initiative shows his Cabinet staff is "thinking outside the box."

"Substance abuse is the mitigating factor for the majority of families we serve," he said. "Instead of just becoming involved after drug abuse has ripped families apart, we want to enable them to find the help they need to stay together, safely."

DCBS Commissioner Tom Emberton Jr. said START involves building strong partnerships with community providers to help parents. The program's goals are to reduce the rate of children's re-entry into foster care and the number of chemically dependent parents.

Emberton said more than 80 percent of children removed from their homes and placed in state care are from families with substance abuse problems.

Prevention services will include parent education classes open to anyone in the community and family support programs. Activities will be targeted at families that have one or more risk factors including substance abuse, teen parents, parents of special needs children, single parents and low-income households.

Secondary prevention services include parent education classes targeted for high-risk parents, respite care for parents of a child with a disability, or home visiting programs for new parents.

Emberton said the START pilot marks the department's stronger approach toward enhancing the prevention-related resources that target child safety, family preservation and reunification.

“Substance abuse has ill effects on every area of family life and the state often pays to remedy those issues,” Emberton said. “The department believes prevention and early intervention programs like these that require more funding on the ‘front-end’ with families may prevent long stays or repeat placements in foster care, which are more costly on many levels.”

Nine Kentucky communities will get a total of \$800,000 in DCBS grants for the START program. Matching grants from community nonprofit agencies total \$125,000. Several counties also will receive child care assistance grants to help families in treatment.

The following is a list of counties and the funding they will receive:

Barren County

\$100,000 for the START program

\$25,000 for child care assistance

Boyd County

\$50,000 for the START program

\$30,000 for child care assistance

Fayette County

\$100,000 for the START program

\$40,000 for child care assistance

Jefferson County

\$175,000 for the START program

\$75,000 matching United Way funds

\$50,000 for child care assistance

\$25,000 to Midwest Church of Christ

\$10,000 to Peace Presbyterian Church for supervised visitation programs

Kenton County

\$75,000 for the START program

\$25,000 in Child Care funds

Lake Cumberland Region (Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, McCreary, Pulaski, Russell, Taylor and Wayne counties)

\$150,000 for the START program

\$50,000 matching Community Action Council funds

\$30,000 for child care assistance

Magoffin County

\$50,000 for the START program

\$20,000 for child care assistance

McCracken County

\$50,000 for the START program

\$30,000 for child care assistance

Metcalf County

\$50,000 for the START program

Kentuckians Should Pay Less for Natural Gas This Winter

Kentuckians will be paying significantly less for natural gas at the start of the heating season than they paid a year ago, the Kentucky Public Service Commission reports.

“Natural gas production from the Gulf Coast, which supplies most of Kentucky’s gas, is back to normal following last year’s hurricanes, and the market has stabilized,” PSC Chairman Mark David Goss said. “As a result, wholesale gas prices are lower than they were at this time last year.

“This is the first time in four years we have seen lower prices at the start of the heating season,” Goss said. “Gas costs are back to about where they were two years ago.”

How much consumers pay to heat their homes this winter will depend, as always, on the weather, Goss noted. Last winter was unusually mild, which helped offset the record high gas prices, he said.

“Lower gas costs this year are no reason to back away from measures to conserve energy,” Goss said. “Reducing consumption is the best defense against high energy bills.”

Natural gas prices began rising steadily in 2003. The sharpest increase – about 40 percent - occurred a year ago, after hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged production and processing facilities on the Gulf Coast. Production was not restored to normal levels until this summer.

The return to adequate production, combined with ample amounts of gas in storage for the winter heating season, pushed wholesale gas prices steadily downward over much of this year. They have risen somewhat this fall, as they typically do before the heating season.

Although natural gas prices are lower than last year, many Kentuckians still have difficulty paying their heating bills, Goss said. Information on heating assistance programs is available from utility companies or from local community action agencies, he said.

“Look for help now if you think you may need it later,” Goss said. “Do not delay until the situation becomes a crisis.”

About 44 percent of Kentuckians heat their homes with natural gas. Those who heat with propane (10 percent) and fuel oil (3 percent) also are seeing lower prices than a year ago.

Make Your Home Energy Efficient

Kentucky consumers can take a number of steps to reduce their natural gas usage or to soften the impact of gas costs. They include:

Budget billing: This option allows customers to pay the same amount each month, based on their average monthly usage during the year. Customers should contact their utility for more information.

Energy conservation measures: Simple steps such as turning down thermostats on furnaces (most people are comfortable at 68 degrees) and water heaters (120 degrees is hot enough for nearly all uses)

can be big energy savers.

Energy audits: Many local utilities offer home energy audits at little or no cost to consumers. These audits can identify energy-wasting trouble spots and provide information on how to correct the problems.

Weatherization: Consumers can do a number of things to reduce inflows of cold air and leakage of warm air, particularly around windows and doors. Some basic weatherization steps include:

- Use caulk or weather-stripping to seal cracks around windows, doors, pipes and other points where cold air can enter the home. This alone can reduce heating costs by 10 percent or more.
- Add insulation in attics, crawl spaces and walls.
- Cover windows, especially those with single-pane glass, with storm windows or plastic sheeting before the onset of cold weather.
- Clean or replace furnace filters monthly to improve airflow and efficiency.

Advice on conserving energy, including links to a wide range of information, is available from the Kentucky Office of Energy Policy, online at <http://www.energy.ky.gov/dre3/>

Weatherization assistance for low-income families is available in Kentucky. Many utilities offer weatherization assistance in conjunction with local social service agencies. Local agencies also offer assistance through a state program administered by CHFS. For information on weatherization assistance, call (502) 564-7536, ext. 4235, or visit <http://chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dfs/Weatherization.htm>

CHFS Focus Health Tip

Maintaining your home is important to ensure a healthy indoor environment. Consider these tips for keeping your home as healthy, durable and energy efficient as possible.

- Change or clean your air-handling filter.
- Clean and inspect your ventilation system's filters.
- Clean exhaust fans and vents in bathrooms and kitchen.
- Inspect caulking around windows and doors and re-caulk where necessary.
- Inspect and clean rain gutters.
- Clean outside grill of air conditioner compressor and cover for winter.
- Inspect and clean rain gutters.
- Inspect weather-stripping on doors, including garage service doors.
- Inspect interior and exterior of house for signs of moisture intrusion.
- Inspect roof shingles for damage and missing shingles.
- Close outside hose spigot valve (usually in basement).
- Have furnace and water heater serviced.
- Have fireplace and venting system cleaned and serviced.

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Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.



Next time you or one of your colleagues makes a minor mistake or is feeling stressed, try diffusing any tension with laughter. Humor specialist and professional speaker John Kinde suggests we should be alert for opportunities to make one another smile.

Using humor skillfully is one characteristic of a good leader. A sharp wit can increase your level of likability and trust, Kinde says.

Be careful not to use humor to disparage someone else, especially another co-worker. Speaking ill of someone else, even in jest, could hurt your work relationships.