

*At right, Hardin County child protective services caseworker Christy Riley shows off her new work cell phone, digital camera and laptop "tool kit" being provided to Child Protective Services staff as part of modernization efforts in the Department for Community Based Services.*



**CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Lincoln Trail field staff raves about modern 'toolkit'**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Department for Community Based Services staff in the Lincoln Trail Service Region was the first to receive a new electronic "tool kit" last month as part of sweeping modernization within the agency.

The region's 30 child protective services investigators – staff who responds to initial abuse referrals – got the equipment in late November. On Dec. 2, they met with Cabinet officials, including outgoing Secretary James W. Holsinger Jr., M.D.; state Rep. Jimmie Lee, (D-Elizabethtown); and Eugene Foster, Ed.D., undersecretary for children and family services.

Hardin County CPS staff explained the benefits of the new equipment and caseworker Christy Riley offered a demonstration.

"Everyone, especially the families we serve, will benefit from the arrival of these tool kits," Foster said. "We are doing this to improve quality service, documentation and worker efficiency."

The tool kit includes a cellular phone with maximum range, a six-megapixel digital camera with docking station and a small laptop computer.

Reliable cell phone service is a must when a child protection investigation or other situation becomes dangerous. Cameras will help document in detail neglectful living conditions or the possible signs of abuse – or support findings that children are not at risk. With the laptops, staff can enter information immediately into the state's database, eliminating lag time between gathering of and access to information.

Riley, who investigates child fatalities, said the new tools make such delicate work a little less complicated.

"With the laptops we will have more time to spend with people," Riley said. "We can concentrate on doing social work rather than paperwork."

Foster said the equipment can save lives. "For example, if the original worker on a case gets sick, the information will be readily available to whoever takes over."

Caseworkers never know what they might encounter on home visits or investigating abuse referrals, Foster said.

"The scourge of methamphetamine production and addiction gives us one more reason to keep staff safety as well as children's well-being in mind," he said.

Staff at this month's meeting expressed sincere gratitude to Holsinger, Foster and Lee for their efforts to upgrade CPS safety and casework support.

"We are so grateful for this equipment," said Lisa Clark, a CPS investigations supervisor in Hardin County. "Before, we were sharing Polaroid cameras I'd pick up at yard sales. And staff would put hundreds of minutes on their personal cell phones. It's nice that we each have these reliable tools."

Cost is the biggest obstacle in delivering the upgraded technology across Kentucky, Holsinger said. But Lee "has played a vital role with the funding for this important effort," he said, adding that with help from Lee and other lawmakers, more upgrades to DCBS services can be funded by next year's General Assembly.

"Our staff will continue to garner support from the legislature to get the best resources available to our staff, so they can better assist families in crisis," Holsinger said.

Lincoln Trail staff will pilot test equipment for 60 days. In February, they will meet together again to evaluate the tool kit before expanding tool kit availability to other staff across the state.

*At right, outgoing CHFS Secretary James W. Holsinger Jr., M.D.; state Rep. Jimmie Lee, (D-Elizabethtown); and Libby Trager, Lincoln Trail service region administrator, listen during a staff demonstration.*



December 12, 2005

### CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: Health Access Nurturing Development Services

Thousands of Kentuckians benefit from Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS), a voluntary program that provides intensive, in-home support and parental skills assistance first-time parents.



The intent of HANDS is to improve health and social outcomes for children and their families by supporting healthy pregnancies, child growth and development and homes as well as family self-sufficiency. HANDS was created to help new parents access important information and resources. Past HANDS participants praise its benefits and strongly encourage other first-time parents to take advantage of the program.

“There are programs people are familiar with, such as WIC, family planning and well child, that have been around for some time,” wrote Madison County parent Patricia Purdon, in a letter to her local newspaper. “The program our family is most excited about is a program called HANDS or Health Access Nurturing Development Services. The HANDS program is not just for a certain group. Rather, it’s available to all first-time parents. HANDS is not a program that gives money, clothing, food or furniture. It gives something much more valuable - someone to visit regularly (and provide) an A-to-Z teaching guide about what to expect, what can happen unexpectedly and how to use things you already have at home to make things and prepare for baby.”

HANDS family support workers are armed with an assortment of facts and parenting resources, instructions on everything from health care needs to how to construct a mobile using items from the home.

HANDS staff traveled to more than 134,000 homes and completed nearly 6,000 parent visits during the 2005 fiscal year – that’s about 11,000 home visits each month. In all, HANDS reached 11,255 Kentucky families.

Program staff efforts have been successful, resulting in more than 30,000 agency referrals for assistance and intervention with substance abuse, mental health, basic needs, developmental delays, physician care and domestic violence.

Birth indicators based on 2000-03 data showed HANDS participants had fewer premature infants, low and very low birth weight infants and birth defects compared to first-time parents who did not participate in the program. Likewise, infant mortality rates per thousand for HANDS children were significantly lower than the statewide rate (1.6 compared to 6.4) in 2002. A 2004 study of child abuse and neglect found that teen parents participating in HANDS had no incidents of substantiated physical, sexual or emotional child abuse.

“The home visitors from this program are not social workers - they don’t come to see how clean your house is or how well furnished it is; they don’t care if you live in a 20-room mansion or a two-room apartment,” Purdon said. “They have helped our family to understand that no question is foolish, and that the safety and well-being of mother and baby - both emotional and physical - are the main issues during pregnancy.”

Clearly, the efforts of HANDS staff are improving the lives and future prospects of Kentucky families.

### A message from Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell

CHFS Staff:

I am pleased to announce some administrative decisions I have made regarding staffing of the Office of the Secretary.

Danelle Groves will continue in her role as administrative assistant to the Secretary and accordingly has assumed all scheduling and other administrative support functions for my office.

Shawn M. Crouch will begin serving as deputy secretary and will continue to serve as executive director of the Office of Health Policy which will be attached to the Office of the Secretary. Jane Corder will serve as administrative assistant to Mr. Crouch in these capacities. Both of the individuals will establish their offices in the fifth floor Secretary's Office suite.

Mike Burnside will also be serving as deputy secretary and will continue to serve as the undersecretary for administrative and fiscal affairs. Linda McDonald will serve as administrative assistant to Mr. Burnside. Both will be moving to the inner offices in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Undersecretary’s Office Suite.



Mark Washington will be serving as deputy commissioner for the Department for Community Based Services with a focus on our modernization efforts.

As previously announced, Matthew Bassett will continue as my chief of staff and in addition will serve as a senior policy adviser to the Governor as it relates to our Cabinet's programs.

I do not intend to fill the position of undersecretary for health. Accordingly, the Department of Medicaid Services, Department for Public Health and the Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services will report directly to me.

I ask for your continued support for the Cabinet leadership team as we approach the challenging days ahead.

#### **COT to remove "mail.state.ky.us" addresses**

Two years ago the Commonwealth Office of Technology launched the 'ky.gov' e-mail address, which replaced the former 'mail.state.ky.us'



address. Although mail sent to old addresses would continue for some time to be redirected to the appropriate party, everyone was advised to notify all parties with whom they conducted business by e-mail of the address change and to update all contact materials, including business cards, Web addresses, pamphlets, etc. Effective Dec. 31, 2005, e-mail sent to former 'mail.state.ky.us' addresses will no longer be routed to the appropriate ky.gov address. E-mail sent to old addresses will be bounced back to the sender.

A side benefit of this transition is elimination of a lot of 'spam' e-mail many state workers now receive from sources using the old addresses. All staff who have joined state government or been assigned e-mail accounts in the past two years already have ky.gov addresses and should see no difference.

If you have not notified your e-mail contacts, please do so immediately.

#### **Employee drug testing to begin at state mental health/mental retardation facilities**

*Policy designed to protect vulnerable residents*

Beginning Jan. 1, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services will pilot a drug-testing program for state and contract employees at all state-run mental health and mental retardation (MH/MR) facilities. Governor Ernie Fletcher today signed an emergency regulation launching the program.

Testing will include random, pre-employment and probable-cause testing for illegal drugs. Approximately 3,600 employees work in the state's 12 MH/MR facilities.

"My administration is committed to providing a safe environment for residents and employees at our facilities," said Governor Ernie Fletcher. "This is a critical step to ensure we do everything we can to fulfill that commitment.

"The primary reason for instituting drug testing is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents we serve," said Cabinet Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. "It is imperative that those who care for some of Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens are drug-free."

The CHFS Office of Inspector General recommended adoption of a drug-testing policy. Kentucky's policy is based on federal regulations affecting civil service employees.

Applicants who refuse or fail a drug test will not be considered for employment. Employees who refuse or fail a drug test will face punishment up to and including termination.

In October, the Department of Corrections (DOC) implemented a policy of testing prospective new employees. Since then, 10 percent of those tested positive. On Jan. 1, the DOC will expand its program to include random testing.

"We believe the results of the Department of Corrections' pilot project warrant us expanding the program to include our employees who care for residents at state-run mental health/mental retardation facilities," said Secretary Birdwhistell.

Drug testing of employees is common at private health care facilities. Kentucky State Police also screen applicants for drugs, and the Transportation Cabinet screens according to federal Department of Transportation requirements.

December 12, 2005

## **Worker's compensation has new third-party administrator**

The Office of Human Resource Management was recently notified that the state has contracted with a new third-party administrator to manage the worker's compensation program.

Since Oct. 1, the new administrator, CCMSI (Cannon Cochran Management Services, Inc.), has been providing a managed health care system for worker's compensation claimants. The system uses providers within the Concentra Managed Health Care Plan network. As a requirement of this new plan, employees must see authorized Concentra network providers to be eligible for coverage of medical costs associated with a work-related injury. All non-emergency care must be pre-authorized by the Concentra Utilization Review Office, which can be reached at 1-866-361-6899. No pre-authorization is needed for emergency care (defined as a medical condition that if left untreated could lead to a disability or death; or when one seeks to alleviate severe pain, only). Also, Kentucky has designated Emeric, Inc. to provide a prescription program that allows a covered employee to provide his or her pharmacy with an authorization notice and the prescription will be billed directly to Emeric. Any questions related to this program can be directed to your site coordinator. Employees with claims for worker's compensation prior to Oct. 1 will be allowed to continue with their existing coverage plans.

Under the CCMSI system, employees may be covered for services received from see health care providers outside the network in the following situations:

- When an employee is in treatment for an injury that occurred prior to the managed health care plan implementation;
- When an employee requires emergency care (as defined above) and chooses to remain under the care of that provider for follow-up treatment;
- On referral to a non-network provider by a Concentra Managed Health Care Plan participating provider;
- When authorized treatment is not available from providers in the plan network; or
- To obtain a second opinion when a Concentra Managed Health Care Plan participating provider recommends surgery.

For your convenience, a list of providers by county is available at:

<http://personnel.ky.gov/stemp/workerscomp/wcpostings.htm>

For a complete directory, go to:

[http://www.focus-ppo.com/kymco/KY\\_FOCUS\\_Providers.pdf](http://www.focus-ppo.com/kymco/KY_FOCUS_Providers.pdf)

(when prompted, enter any generic items into the username and password and hit enter)

For assistance, please call 1-800-243-2336 (option 2-network providers). You may also seek assistance by calling 1-866-361-6899 once the first report of injury has been filed. The 24-hour number is 1-866-624-6390. Other information and guidance is available at:

<http://personnel.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/0E63F14C-FFA8-4AD3-8987-5FBE63234EAB/0/managedhcplan.pdf>.

## **New Employees invited to enroll in Kentucky Deferred Compensation**

It is never too soon to begin planning for your retirement. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is an optional state-sponsored benefit available to all state employees and can help state workers achieve financial independence at retirement. An upcoming enrollment presentation will explain:

- The benefits of investing pre-tax dollars;
- The best way to invest your money to help meet your retirement goals; and
- How to enroll in the Kentucky Deferred Compensation 401(k) and/or 457 plan immediately.



The New Employee Enrollment Seminar will be held on Dec. 20 from 12:10 p.m. to 12:50 p.m. at 105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 1, Frankfort. Seating is limited and pre-registration is required.

To register, call Carol Cummins or Larincia Bowers at (502) 573-7925 or 800-542-2667.

## **Postage rate increase**

The United States Postal Service has announced a postage rate increase effective Jan. 8, 2006.

Most postage rates will increase by 5.4 percent. For example, the postage for a one-ounce, first-class letter will increase from 37 cents to 39 cents. More information about the USPS rate increase is available at <http://www.usps.com/ratecase/welcome.htm> or you may contact the state Division of Postal Services at (502) 564-3769.



December 12, 2005

**CHFS Health Tip of the Week: Stress busters for the holidays**

*By Anne Parr, R.N.*

Here are some helpful hints to reduce stress during what should be a fun and relaxing time – the holidays.

- Recognize the signs of stress, such as irritability and anxiety, and avoid them by putting yourself in control of things instead of just letting them happen.
- Allow yourself to say “no.” Be realistic about what you can and cannot do during this busy month. Don't feel obligated to attend every holiday party or make 1,000 cookies from scratch for your church group.
- Watch your diet. It's very easy during this time to overindulge on holiday treats. Sugar overload will make you sluggish and the stimulating effect of caffeine may make you overanxious.
- Exercise. Not only will it combat those extra calories you're consuming, it will also relieve tension and provide relaxation.

Happy Relaxed Holidays!

**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.*

At the end of the year, many work projects may remain to be completed. Add to those demands our busy home lives, and it's not difficult to become overwhelmed during the holiday season.

Marc Graff, M.D., a psychiatrist at Kaiser Permanente in Reseda, Calif., has this advice: Take it easy. To de-stress yourself, choose a focal point and stare at it for a few minutes. Pair that intense focus with deep breathing to really calm down. Here's how:

- Take a deep breath, filling your lungs and expanding your chest. Push your stomach out;
- Slowly exhale, pulling your stomach in toward your spine; and
- Repeat until you feel your body relaxing.



*Happy Holidays from the  
CHFS Division of  
Communications  
to all our fellow employees  
and your families.*