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Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

**October 2016**

**CIDNY Reboots Our Youth Transition Program**

CIDNY is very excited to reinitiate its Youth Transition Program, "The Next Step." This program helps high school students with disabilities succeed by ensuring they have an effective Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and teaches them to advocate for themselves as they continue on to college and/or the working world.



For students with disabilities who want to work after high school, we help them prepare their resumes, learn how to interview, and give them an opportunity to interact in a work environment. We will also hold workshops for parents and college students about the various disability rights laws.

If you have any questions regarding this program, contact: Shireen Kahn, Youth Transition Counselor, at [skahn@cidny.org](mailto:skahn@cidny.org) or call 646-442- 1521.

**Medicare Annual Open Enrollment**

Fall Open Enrollment for Medicare runs from October 15 through December 7. This is the time anyone with Medicare can make changes to their existing coverage.

You may have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, either through a plan that just covers drugs or through a Medicare Advantage plan that covers all services including drugs. You should receive an Annual Notice of Change listing any 2017 changes to your plan. There may be different monthly premiums, out-of-pocket costs, and covered services. The plan may also change its list of covered drugs. You will want to know if any changes affect you. For example, if your plan will no longer cover your drugs, you may want to switch to a plan that covers them.

If you have limited income/resources, you may be eligible for "Extra Help." You will have this automatically if you have Medicaid or a Medicare Savings Program that pays your Medicare Part B premium. You can also apply for Extra Help through Social Security. With Extra Help, you can get a Part D plan with no premium and low drug copays. You can also switch plans at any time, effective the following month.

During Fall Open Enrollment, whether or not you have Extra Help, you can change the type of coverage you

have (Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage), join or switch drug plans, or simply stay with your current coverage. Any changes you make is effective January 1, 2017.

It is always a good idea to review your coverage and consider whether you need to make any changes. If you have questions, contact Greg Otten at CIDNY: 646-442- 4145 or [gotten@cidny.org](mailto:gotten@cidny.org).

**CIDNY Joins Advocates on "Right to Counsel" Bill**

On September 28, CIDNY testified at a hearing in front of the Legal Services and Courts Committee on Intro 214-A, or Right to Counsel, a bill that would make it a right for all tenants at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to have an attorney in Housing Court.

CIDNY consumers testified at the hearing to support the bill. The press conference was so packed that people were not allowed entry into the stairs of City Hall, and the press conference ran for 1.5 hours. When the hearing began at noon, people were still out on the streets and outside City Hall, waiting to get in. The hearing lasted past 3:30 PM.

Many people testified about their experience with Landlord/Tenant Court and the abusive behaviors of the landlords and their attorneys. One woman spoke of how she had been paying rent on time and was taken to court for failure to pay rent. At court, she presented evidence that she indeed had paid rent. Although she won, she had to go unrepresented and miss several days of work. Basically, the landlord wanted her out because she was in a rent-regulated apartment.

CIDNY's testimony pointed out that due to financial reserves or employment, most of our consumers will become homeless if they are evicted and are likely to stay that way for long periods of time. Although we don't consider homeless shelters an option for any human being, most people with disabilities don't have that option at all since the City's homeless shelters are not accessible. This is a violation of their civil rights and makes an already demeaning and difficult situation even harder. Furthermore, people with disabilities, as all citizens, have a right to due process, including equal access to the legal system, to protect their liberty and property. This means that low-income tenants should not have to appear in housing court without legal representation when that clearly has them at a disadvantage in court and often leads to a downward spiral into long-term homelessness.

It was a powerful day for tenants. They were given the chance to speak, and they came out to do so.

**Quick Takes**

**CIDNY CONSUMER ACTION NETWORK MEETING**

Wednesday, October 19 — 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM  
841 Broadway, Suite 301, between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets  
**Subways:** 4, 5, 6, L, N, Q, R to **14<sup>th</sup> Street Union Square**. Station is accessible for the L, N, Q and R lines.

Come learn about changes occurring in rent subsidies for seniors and people with disabilities (SCRIE/DRIE). The Department of Finance will update you on SCRIE/DRIE and answer any questions you may have. Join us and bring your questions. This is an opportunity to be heard!

Ven a conocer los cambios que se producen en ayudas al alquiler para personas mayores y personas con discapacidad (SCRIE/DRIE). El Departamento de Hacienda le informará sobre SCRIE/DRIE y responderá a cualquier pregunta que pueda tener. Únase con nosotros y traiga sus preguntas. Esta es una oportunidad de ser escuchado!

Please RSVP to Eva Eason at (646) 442-4156. If you need an accommodation, such as large print or interpretation services (ASL), please let us know by Wednesday, October 12.

**CIDNY Consumers Discuss Quality Measures in Health Care**

Ten CIDNY Consumers participated in a discussion of the various quality measures that are used to rate Health Plans and Providers at September's Consumer Action Network (CAN) meeting in Queens.

Participants reviewed various outcome measures, process measures, and patient experience measures that are used to evaluate hospitals and other providers.

For example, is the provider treating you in the way that is recommended for your condition? Does the provider show good outcomes for the patient? Are the facilities clean and accessible? How well the provider does communicates with you?

They also considered the five categories that are used to determine star ratings for Medicare plans, which include:

- Staying healthy: screenings, tests, and vaccines,
- Managing chronic (long-term) conditions,
- Plan responsiveness and care,
- Member complaints, problems getting services, and choosing to leave the plan, and
- Health plan customer service.

CAN members agreed that it is important to have providers who knows your history and communicate with each other so that you don't have to explain things repeatedly.

The way we receive our health care is changing with Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance coming up with new models of paying providers based on the "value" of our care, rather than on the numbers of procedures or visits. All of these changes are meant to improve quality of care while reducing cost. To avoid the possibility that these initiatives will result in harmful cuts to care and services it is important that Plans and providers are held to quality measures that truly improve our health.

We hope to repeat this discussion at a future CAN meeting in Manhattan to get input from more CIDNY consumers.



**If You Like to Write or Would Like to Try Your Hand at It, Join CIDNY's Writers' Group**

Every Thursday, a friendly group gathers in the conference room at CIDNY-Manhattan for a free writing workshop.

Although each of us has a disability, that is not necessarily what we write about, for we have so much more to express. Most of the people in the group never thought of themselves as writers before they joined—but they found that in the uncritical, supportive atmosphere of the workshop they become writers. We never criticize anyone's work; we only praise what we enjoy.

There's no need to prepare anything beforehand, because the leader, a published author, always gives a suggestion for what to write about. You can write prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction. And there's no obligation to do any work outside of the workshop.

CIDNY's Writers Group is part of the NY Writers Coalition network. The Coalition offers workshops throughout the city. Being part of our group allows you to take other free workshops, and attend, and take part in, readings at no cost. We would love to have you as a new member and hear the unique, interesting, and beautiful things you have to say. We hope you will join us.

CIDNY's Writers Group meets every Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at our Manhattan office. Spaces are limited, so please contact CIDNY at 212-674-2300 if you would like to be on the list or need an accommodation.