



Washington County
Department of Social Services
Commitment to Community



Partners in Press

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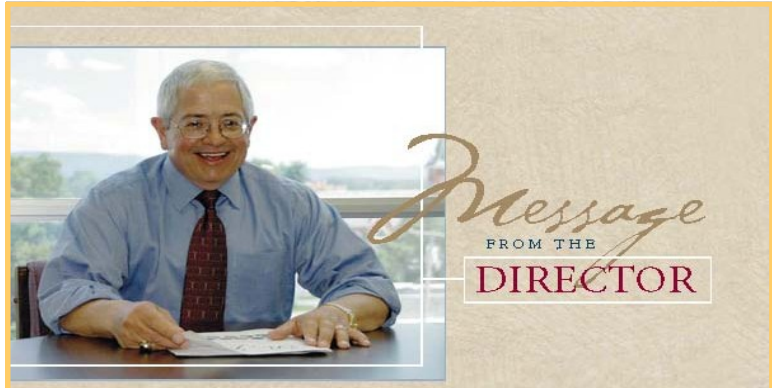
Spring 2014

*We serve people,
promote self-reliance,
and provide safety by delivering
quality services and developing
community partnerships.*

-WCDSS Mission Statement

*"You have not lived today,
until you have done some-
thing for someone who can
never repay you."*

-John Bunyan



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

REAL PEOPLE BEHIND THE NUMBERS

2014 is still young, but has already been a year of extraordinary accomplishments for WCDSS clients and staff. Recently, the Executive Director of the Maryland Department of Human Resources Family Investment Administration (DHR-FIA) delivered **three** golden fork awards and homemade cookies to honor our FIA staff for their excellence in food stamp compliance and accuracy. All of us were pleasantly pleased when we achieved Reaccreditation by the National Council on Accreditation with **no findings** in their fundamental practice standards. At our Employee Recognition Day on March 21st we recognized fourteen staff for their outstanding service above and beyond the call of duty. These are all accomplishments of which we can be extraordinarily proud, but the ultimate measure of all our accomplishments is their affect on those we serve.

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Director's Corner Continued...


In this Director's Corner, I would like to highlight a small sampling of those most important successes.

Our first story involves a single mother who fled a dangerous domestic violence situation and relocated to Washington County in search of safety for herself and her children. The young woman had no knowledge of this area, and no friends or family to help her start life over. As part of her new beginning, she made contact with our Job Center where staff helped her with financial assistance and her pursuit of employment. She now feels blessed to have found a job and resources to benefit herself and her family. Without a vehicle of her own, she uses the Job Opportunities Bus Shuttle and states that she feels like a queen when she can walk out of her place of employment and step into a vehicle that will also pick up her children from day care and take them all home.

Mrs. Doe met with our child support staff to establish a child support order for her minor child. Her husband lived off and on with the family, but was unable to maintain gainful employment. The couple eventually separated and filed for divorce. Mr. Doe made sporadic child support payments and was cited several times for contempt of court for failure to pay his child support. After failing to appear for one contempt hearing, a warrant was issued for his arrest with a bond set at more than \$10,000, the amount of his arrears. Subsequently, Mr. Doe was arrested on his outstanding warrant and appeared before a circuit court judge. At that time Mr. Doe stated he planned to sell some property and promised to use his proceeds to pay his debt. Later, Mrs. Doe reported that the property had been sold, and another court date was scheduled. Once again, however, Mr. Doe failed to appear for his hearing. Our child support staff asked the court for an injunction order to intercept the five figure arrears from Mr. Doe's portion of the property sale. Upon notice of this proceeding, Mr. Doe came into our office and completed paperwork to release the funds to the custodial parent and his minor child. Our child support staff's "creative collection approach" will have a profound impact on the child's future as he completes his high school education and plans for his future.

Jane was removed from her home as a result of child abuse. Ultimately, her parents' parental rights were terminated. She spent many years in foster care and was relocated numerous times. Jane had no real connections with anyone other than paid staff. Jane was then identified as a candidate for our Family Finding program where we seek to find family members who promise to become life connections for their relative. As part of this process, we contacted Jane's biological mother who had made significant positive life changes since Jane's removal. When Jane and her mother were reconnected, they bonded immediately. Today, Jane spends weekends with her mother and plans to eventually transition to her home. Jane now has a family member who will support and guide her as she exits the foster care system.

The cases above are some of the true stories behind "the numbers". We are always proud of our "numbers," but we must never lose sight that the ultimate beneficiaries, and focus of our work, are the real children and adults who depend on us for a better future. Congratulations for all of your accomplishments and for the enormous impact you have on the lives of our neighbors!



What you *get* by achieving your goals is not as important
as what you *become* by achieving your goals.
—Henry David Thoreau

2013-2014 WASHINGTON COUNTY DSS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Bonnie Elgin, Chairperson
 William K. Beard, Vice Chair
 Evelyn Williams, Secretary

Sheryl Goree
 Robert Petties
 Norma Sappington

Randall I. Schultz
 Terry Baker, County Commissioner,
 Ex-Officio Member

Board meetings are held the fourth Monday of the month (September-June) at 5:30 pm in the Washington County DSS Board Room.

How to reach us:

Wash. Co. Department of Social Services
 122 N. Potomac St., Hagerstown, MD 21741
 Phone: 240-420-2100 Fax: 240-420-2111
 Child Abuse Hotline: 240-420-2222
www.dhr.state.md.us/washington.htm

 The Safe Place — Child Advocacy Center
 24 N. Walnut Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740
 Phone: 240-420-4300 Fax: 240-420-4339

The Family Center
 221 McRand Court
 Hagerstown, MD 21740
 Phone: 301-790-4002 Fax: 301-790-4007

Martin O'Malley, Governor
 Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor
 Theodore Dallas, Secretary



Congratulations!

The following Years of Service Awards were presented at the April 9th All Staff meeting:

YEARS	SERVICE TO AGENCY	SERVICE TO STATE
5	Linda Bell-Cardwell Shannon Bennett Ed Soffe	Linda Bell-Cardwell Megan Jordan Ed Soffe Jill Farkosh
10	Amanda Bishop	
15	Melissa Clark	Melissa Clark
25	Susie Butts	Susie Butts
30		Hector Gomez

Be the change
 you wish
 to see in the world.
 -Gandhi





By Diane Eves

Child Support Celebrates Parents' Days

Each spring the Child Support Division makes plans to recognize moms and dads for their commitment to the tough job of raising and supporting children.

The Child Support lobby will be a focal point for thanking parents and providing information and giveaways. New this year will be a children's "make and take" craft/card to present to their mom or dad.

The Mother's Day event was held the week of May 5-9.
The Father's Day event will be held the week of June 9-13.

Look for our "appreciation bows" downtown!
Team members are Gail Johnston, Tracy Knable, Jill Meyers, Laurie Taylor and Alyson Willard.



Cinco de Mayo in Child Support

The Child Support Smile Team celebrated Cinco de Mayo with a taco bar and Mexican cheesecake on May 6th.



Family Investment News



By Carly McFerren



Affordable Care Act Update



Effective 3/31/14 the open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was closed. The next open enrollment period is in November. Life changes such as marriage, newborns, loss of coverage, closure of Medicaid, and other events qualify applicants to apply for ACA. Navigators are no longer housed at DSS but are available to assist applicants at the Health Department or Healthy Howard at 855-288-3667. Washington County DSS continues to process Medicaid applications. ACA applications filed here are forwarded to the Navigators.



Family Self-Sufficiency



The Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is a voluntary program offered by the Hagerstown Housing Authority that aids participants in achieving specific goals. These goals are concentrated on education, job training and placements, budgeting, credit repair, vehicles, homes, among others. Each participant is matched with a case manager and must be a resident of Public Housing or Section 8. The program lasts up to five years. Along with individual case management, participants have the opportunity to build an escrow savings account during their participation. The average escrow account is \$7,343.22 that is used to fund participants' goals. Within the past five years, there have been 96 graduates from FSS. Beginning participants averaged a yearly income of \$3,455.61 and increased these earnings to \$21,060.69 by graduation.



Leadership Development Program Fair



On May 14th the “Programs and People of Washington County DSS” held an interagency fair to help staff to get to know each other better. At the fair employees from Administration, Child Support, Family Investment, and Adult, Child and Family Services were highlighted through fun facts that they submitted about themselves. Staff was encouraged to read profiles and interact with coworkers they may have never met. Games and refreshments were available to those who attended. Services provided by each division were also highlighted. We look forward to continuing the fair in the future! The Leadership Development Program is offered biannually. This year’s participants graduate June 9th.



Washington County Family Center Hosts its 14th Annual Graduation Celebration



By Dori Yorks, Family Center Director

On May 22, 2014 the Family Center will hold a graduation celebration at Leiter's Fine Catering in Williamsport. We are very proud to announce that this year we will have a 100% graduation rate through our high school credit program. The Family Center will recognize 24 individuals who have achieved their goal of obtaining a diploma -- 18 high school students, including one father, and four GED/EDP students. During the event, participants will receive graduation gifts (provided for the last 10 years by an anonymous donor) and individual recognition of their strength and determination in reaching their goals. This event showcases the educational partnership between the Washington County Family Center, Washington County Public Schools and Hagerstown Community College. Of those graduating, five students plan to attend Hagerstown Community College in the fall.



Teen Parent Simulation Held at Washington County Family Center



By Dori Yorks, Family Center Director

During the 2014 spring semester about 25 students, enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program at Frostburg State University - Hagerstown, walked in the shoes of teen parents during a simulation exercise at the Family Center. Family Center staff, inspired by participant stories, developed a simulation exercise to assist Frostburg State University's up and coming teachers in understanding challenges that many young parents of school aged children face. Student role plays explored barriers experienced by young parents including: limited transportation, childcare issues, inability to pay for "special" activities for children, etc. Students left the workshop having gained a greater understanding of the stressors in the lives of young parents and the impact these stressors have on the children in their classrooms. It is our hope that through these types of partnership experiences future educators will be better equipped to effectively work with young parents.

WCDSS 25th Annual Employee Recognition Day

By Bruce Massey

The Washington County Department of Social Services held its 25th Annual Employee Recognition Day on March 21, 2014. Twenty staff members and community partners were honored for their contributions to the organization and the people they serve.

“Washington County DSS employees give so much of themselves each and every day to assist vulnerable children, adults, and families that we serve,” said David A. Engle, Director of Washington County DSS. “It is important that we pause and acknowledge their exceptional work.”

Dr. Dale Henry, a motivational speaker, provided an inspirational message. The day’s activities included an awards ceremony during which employees were recognized for their outstanding performance and contributions and for their participation in the agency’s Performance Quality Improvement Program, which has been in place for 15 years.

The following awards were given:

Director’s Award for Distinguished Service: **John Kenney**, Adult Services Program Manager
WCDSS Employee of the Year: **Barry Shoemaker**, Budget Analyst, Administration
Outstanding Supervisor of the Year: **Nikki Snider**, Adult Services
Outstanding Support Person of the Year: **Anne Marie Parker**, Child Welfare
Rookie of the Year: **Deb Wasilius**, Administration
Meritorious Service Awards: **Tiffany Lowe & Tammy Puffenberger**, Services
Most Uplifting Person Award: **Eddie Van Metre**, Services
Unsung Heroes Award: **Gary Poffenberger, Wilson Beuparlant, Butch Pryor & Joe Cass**

Agency Value Awards linked to the Agency’s mission and vision statement were also awarded:

Communication Value Award: **James Gossard**, Family Investment Supervisor
Quality of Services Value Award: **Mary Jo Barnhart**, Child Welfare Screener
Respect Value Award: **Denise Marshall**, Child Welfare

Outstanding Community Partner Awards were granted to:

Commitment to Community Award: **Mark Poerio**, Paul Hastings LLP
Catherine Bynum, Paul Hastings LLP
Cynthia Hockenbury, Washington County Community Action Council
Mary Helmer, Washington County Sheriff’s Department
Casey Nogle, Washington County Sheriff’s Department

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Attending the event were County Commissioner President Terry L. Baker, Commissioner Members John F. Barr, Jeffrey Cline, Ruth Anne Callahan, and William McKinley. Commissioner President Baker addressed the employees and thanked them for the service they provide to the citizens of Washington County.

On Right: Our resident “Witch Doctor”, Services worker Beth Hawbaker and Agency Director David Engle at the “Laughter is the Best Medicine” themed Employee Recognition Day.



WCDSS BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

By Bruce Massey



We are constantly striving to make Washington County Department of Social Services a better place to work. As a result of recent new lease negotiations, we were able to secure enhancements to the building. Below are a few recent improvements:

- New thermal windows on the second and third floors and on Potomac Street facade.
- A new window railing on the third floor front façade.
- New security system access required to ride the elevators from the Terrace and first floor.
- A new awning over the rear entrance – which is already keeping the floor drier and safer.
- New restroom faucets.
- New exterior safety lighting on each side and rear of the building.

And.....there is more to come:

- New sound efficient walls for the Drew Forrester Room.
- Additional storage space for Adult Services and FI on the second floor.
- New security walls around the Child Support mobile filing system.
- New room on the third floor across from the secretarial unit.
- New IT room to be carved out of the stock room with a separate entrance.
- New front doors for the public entrance.
- Two new FI scanning stations.

There should be no interruption to our work environment or to service to our customers when the enhancements are completed. So, please pardon the dust, as improvements take place. Thank you!



Project Home Picnic

By Leo Brassard

This year's Project Home Resident-CARE Provider Picnic on June 5, 2014 at Byron Memorial Park promises to be an outstanding event as it occurs every year. What makes the day memorable is the fellowship that is shared by everyone present. This includes all of the residents, care providers, state and agency officials along with staff. There is always an excellent turnout and everyone present enjoys the food and location which contributes to an enjoyable atmosphere.

In preparing for this fun event, the Project Home staff has always used a simple formula: Food + Door Prizes + Fellowship = a good time. The experience this year will leave everyone with enough on their plate. The flavor of hot dogs and hamburgers with baked beans will have everyone who plans to attend marking their calendars.

The Washington County Department of Social Services Community Partners Open House

By Mark Conrad

On **September 15, 2014**, WCDSS will once again be opening its doors to our Community Partners to allow the service providers of Washington County to showcase their many programs, while affording them the opportunity to network with one another. Guided tours of the Family Center, Sunshine Center, and Safe Place Child Advocacy Center will be available that morning from 9-11:00 AM. Activities at WCDSS will begin at 11:30 AM and will include presentations from each of the agency's program areas.

Providers attending the open house may either reserve a table or just come to learn. Those reserving tables may drop off their items at the back door prior to parking. Parking at the North Potomac Street parking deck can be validated by event staff.

Registration forms for the Open House will be sent out in June with a RSVP date of August 8, 2014. Completed registration forms can be mailed to Mark Conrad at P.O. Box 1419, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741-1419, or simply emailed to mark.conrad@maryland.gov.

**We all do better when we work together. Our differences
do matter, but our common humanity matters more.**

- Bill Clinton



The WCDSS Diversity Team Celebrates Cinco de Mayo and Latino Heritage Month



By Mike Piercy

Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican festival that celebrates the Battle of Puebla which was a decisive victory of native Mexican forces over a colonial king installed by Napoleon III. It would be equivalent in feeling and fervor to July 4th, the United State's celebration of independence.



To celebrate this Mexican holiday, which also is a holiday which also promotes Latino heritage, Bolivian dancers were invited to dance the Tobas for Washington County DSS staff. The Tobas is a folk dance from Bolivia. The folkloric dance of the Tobas speaks of the ancient past of Bolivia. It has roots in a time when the Incas were the predominant force in the Andean highlands region. Tobas is an athletic dance comprising agile steps accentuated with many jumps and bounds. Shirley Parra and her two daughters did an outstanding job providing a choreographed performance along with Marita Hoyos (the Executive Director of Comunidad Latina) who gave a vocal performance of two songs in Spanish.

Thanks to all those who attended and joined in the Diversity Team's celebration of Latino heritage for the month of May.



On left: Shirley Parra and family, Mike Piercy and Marita Hoyos at the WCDSS Diversity Team event.



Friends of Safe Place
Washington County Child Advocacy Center

24 N. Walnut Street, Suite 206
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
Phone: 240-420-4308



The Safe Place, Child Advocacy Center News



By Mooch Mutchler

What a busy spring it has been for Safe Place, Child Advocacy Center! Another Child Abuse Prevention Month has come and gone, and you could not blame the Safe Place Staff and Friends of Safe Place Board members if they took a little time to relax now. The month started off with “Paint the Town Blue Campaign” – blue ribbons were placed throughout the downtown as a reminder of the horrors of child abuse. Over 1,000 blue flags were also placed in the Elks holler. Friends Board Members worked with students at Tech High to create two billboards on child abuse prevention. You could see the billboards by Bester, on Burhans Blvd. and in Hancock. And speaking of Hancock, the annual “Walk to End Child Abuse,” took place there. Hundreds of participants walked and ran to call attention to child abuse. Finally, the 3rd Annual Bachelor Auction brought 150 fun loving men and women together to raise some cash for the Center. Thanks to everyone that supported our efforts! Let’s continue to work together to keep Washington County kids SAFE. Happy Memorial Day everyone!



**April is Child Abuse
Prevention Month**



One of the billboards designed by Tech High students.

“The way we talk to our
children becomes their inner
voice.”
– Peggy O’Mara





Homeless ID Day & Homeless Resource Day

By John Kenney



The first Homeless ID Day on February 21st and third Homeless Resource Day on March 1st for Washington County were resounding successes. Many agencies and individuals helped connect homeless and near homeless people in our community with the resources they need. The Homeless Coalition's chairperson, Cindy Hockenbury, coordinated and led the planning and operation of both events.

Homeless ID Day assisted 52 persons and the Homeless Resource Day served 121 adults and approximately 15 children. Over thirty-five vendors provided a wide range of services and assistance during these events. This included:

- Financial and supplemental nutrition assistance from WCDSS's Family Investment.
- The Office of Consumer Advocates provided transportation during the Homeless ID Day.
- The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration provided screeners at the Aspiring to Serve building and paid for the photo IDs for participants served during the Homeless ID event.
- The Hagerstown Branch Office of the Social Security Administration assisted guests with obtaining Social Security cards during the Homeless ID Day.
- The Washington County Department of Social Services and Department of Human Resources provided \$5,000 to fund the events, as well as provided transportation for participants and volunteers.
- The Washington County Health Department issued Maryland Birth Certificates to 16 participants during the ID Day event and provided emergency dental care during the Homeless Resource Day.
- The Washington County Commission on Aging and Aspiring to Serve provided space and Wi-Fi support for the Homeless ID Day and loaned tables and chairs for the Resource Day.
- The Community Action Council provided leadership staffing and upfront funding to meet needs at both events.
- Turning Point and Way Station hosted the Homeless Resource Day guests and vendors.
- Holcim Cement prepared gift bags filled with practical items for the participants, including toothbrushes donated by Cool Smiles.
- Priority Partners donated waterproof folders for guests.
- The Mental Health Authority and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene paid for birth certificates for persons with mental health conditions.
- Hair Cuttery performed 70 free haircuts at the Homeless Resource Day.
- Way Station checked blood pressures.
- Food and drink were generously donated by: Pepsi, Krumpe's Donuts, Chick-fil-A, Hempen Hill, and Greensburg Farms Wholesale Produce during Homeless Resource Day.

A vital component in the success of these events was the tremendous group of 120 volunteers led by Carrie Tressler of Turning Point of Washington County and Brooklyn Needy, WCDSS Adult Services Student Intern. In addition to the Towson Student Nurses and the Hagerstown Community College Social Work students, the Washington County Department of Social Services staff and board members were an important source of volunteers. Homeless ID Day or Resource Day volunteers associated with Social Services include: Anne Goulart, Karen Christof, Patti Daley, Kathie Duffey, David Engle, Bonnie Elgin, Daniel Elgin, Maria Fairfax, Hector Gomez, Sheryl Goree, Darren House, Wende Huang, John Kenney, Rosalind Martin, Suzanne McErlain, Eleanor Murto, Mooch Mutchler, Anne Orndorff, David Pool, John Rohrer, Norma Sappington, Dortha Russ, Randy Schultz, Sharon Shafer, Nikki Snider, Sharall Turner, Deb Wasilius, and Dori Yorks.



WCDSS Achieves Reaccreditation in 2014



From Left to Right: Tammy Puffenberger - WCDSS Supervisor, Kristina Engel—Peer Review Team, David Engle -WCDSS Director, Kathy Neumann—Peer Review Team, Tiffany Lowe—WCDSS Program Manager, and Gary Haner—Peer Review Team.

By Tiffany Lowe

On March 19, 2014, the Washington County Department of Social Services received notification that we were reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). In addition, **WCDSS was expedited through the Pre-Commission Review Report (PCR) process as a result of not receiving any out of compliance ratings in any of the fundamental practice standards.** Congratulations to each of you on this amazing achievement.

In the notification letter, the president and CEO of the Council on Accreditation, Richard Klarberg, stated “COA’s program of quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have met high performance standards and have made a commitment to their stakeholders to deliver the very best quality services. COA is proud to recognize Washington County Department of Social Services as one of these outstanding providers, and we wish you the very best in your continuing work with the individuals you serve.”

We wanted to say a special thank you to everyone who participated in the preparation for the review as well as those staff persons who made time to be interviewed while the reviewers were onsite. WCDSS received an accreditation plaque which is displayed in an accessible public space where staff and customers can easily take notice and feel confident and proud to be part of Washington County Department of Social Services. A celebration of this achievement was held on May 12 to honor and celebrate you and your contributions to our customers, agency, and accreditation process. *Thank you for your hard work!*

WCDSS COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

QCI Behavioral Health

QCI is a small mental health clinic that specializes in outpatient and mobile Treatment Services. QCI is staffed with an Adult Psychiatrist, C & A Psychiatrist, LCPC's, LCSW-C's and other community staff and professionals.

It is QCI's mission to provide the highest quality of mental health care to a wide variety of patients in a holistic manner to ensure individuals can live, work and recreate in the community. We emphasize prevention, wellness and targeted mental health treatment to multiple population groups, such as: children, adolescents, older adults, homeless citizens, justice system referrals, individuals with dual diagnosis of mental illness and chemical dependence, and persons with physical and developmental disabilities.

Outpatient Mental Health services are available for adults, children, adolescents and families. This service is designed to clinically stabilize psychiatric symptoms, promote family preservation, and enhance functioning and quality of life. Services provided include psychiatric evaluations, medication management, clinical assessments, counseling, and daily living skills training. Our goal is to promote successful community integration.

Mobile Treatment is an intensive, integrated blend of case management, community support, counseling, psychiatry services and nursing support. We provide outreach, treatment and support to those with serious and persistent mental illness and severe emotional disturbances that cannot succeed in a more traditional form of outpatient treatment. Our mobile treatment service providers travel in the community to provide services in the client's own environment – in the home, on the street, in shelters, etc.

QCI's goals are:

- To provide a comprehensive approach to mental health through physician, nurse, therapist and community outreach care.
- To provide prevention and wellness among multiple age populations.
- To focus on targeted needs among the homeless, the chemically dependent, the disabled and those in the justice system.
- To show sensitivity to multi-cultural and ethnic issues.
- To provide flexibility in delivering service and to provide responsible self-direction to clients.
- To provide high accountability and low bureaucracy.
- To provide high quality service at a reasonable/affordable cost.

We strive to obtain client satisfaction through prompt and thorough action.

QCI Behavioral Health is located at 201 North Burhans Blvd, Hagerstown, MD.

Phone: 301-791-2660 Fax # 301-791-5032. www.qcihealth.com.

Referrals can be obtained via fax, mail, email or on our website.

For other information please contact Gerry McCarney, LCPC.



WCDSS Community Partner— The Social Security Administration

Faster Benefit Decisions For Veterans

By Mary K. Castle-Home
Social Security District Manager, Baltimore MD

On Memorial Day, as we pay tribute to the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country, we also share some news about Social Security disability benefits for veterans with disabilities: a new expedited disability process.

We believe it is important to recognize those who currently serve in the military as well as those injured in the line of duty and consider it an honor and a duty to serve them. Whether the injury is physical or mental, getting a decision about Social Security disability benefits from your government shouldn't add to the problem faced by the injured.

Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, recently unveiled a new initiative to expedite disability applications from veterans with a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation rating of 100 percent Permanent and Total (P&T). Under the new process, Social Security will treat these veteran's applications as high priority and issue expedited decisions, similar to the way we currently handle disability claims from wounded warriors.

"Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country and it is only right that we ensure they have timely access to the disability benefits they may be eligible for and deserve," said Acting Commissioner Colvin.

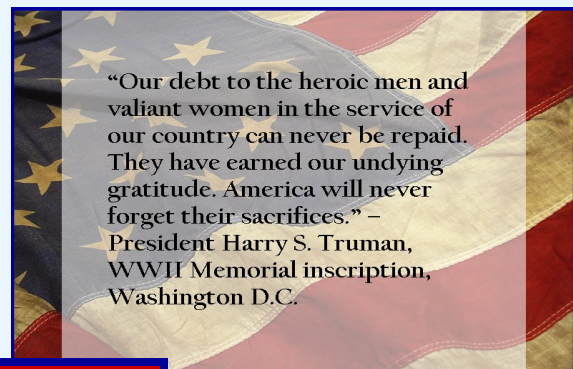
Learn more about the new expedited process for veterans at:

www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice/pr/2014/expedited-dib-process2-pr.html.

Read about this new service at: www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/disability-pt.htm.

Also, you'll want to visit our Wounded Warriors page at:

www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors. There you'll find informative webinars, a Disability Planner, an overview of our disability programs and the convenient online disability application.





WCDSS Community Partner— The Social Security Administration

Give Your Mom Some Extra Help

By Mary K. Castle-Home
Social Security District Manager, Baltimore MD

Mother's Day was May 11th. It's always nice to give Mom a card, flowers, or candy, but this year, people all over the country are helping their moms save an estimated \$4,000 annually on the cost of Medicare prescription drugs. You can help your mom too— and it won't cost you a dime.

If your mother has Medicare coverage and has limited income and resources, she may be eligible for *Extra Help*—available through Social Security—to pay part of her monthly premiums, annual deductibles and prescription co-payments.

To figure out whether your mother is eligible, Social Security needs to know her income and the value of her savings, investments and real estate (other than the home she lives in). To qualify for the *Extra Help*, she must receive Medicare and have:

- Income limited to \$17,505 for an individual or \$23,595 for a married couple living together. Even if your mom's annual income is higher, she still may be able to get some help. Some examples where income may be higher include if she and, if married, her spouse:
 - Support other family members who live with them;
 - Have earnings from work; or
 - Live in Alaska or Hawaii.
- Resources limited to \$13,440 for an individual or \$26,860 for a married couple living together. Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks and bonds. We do not count her house or car as resources.

We have an easy-to-use online application that you can help Mom complete. You can find it at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp. To apply by phone or have an application mailed to you, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) and ask for the Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (SSA-1020).

To learn more about the Medicare Prescription drug plans and special enrollment periods, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048).

This Mother's Day, give your mom a gift she can really use without spending a dime—savings of around \$4,000 a year on her Medicare prescription drug costs! Flowers wither and candy won't last long, but the *Extra Help* through Social Security will keep on giving throughout the year. And keep in mind as Father's Day approaches, you can get the same "free gift" of *Extra Help* for Dad! Learn more by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.



one small
positive
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