

BRIDGEWAY WEEKLY MONITOR
News Briefs from Human Resources – February 22, 2008

CHICAGO TRIBUNE EDITORIAL

Attached is an editorial from the Chicago Tribune, it states in a very eloquent way many of the problems that exist in Illinois and how they impact human service providers, everything stated here is true and has caused great difficulty for Bridgeway. Many of you have wondered why we have had some bad years recently, please read this as it tells many of the hardships faced by providers like Bridgeway. Our problem is the fact that the state of Illinois and Governor Blagojevich do not care about you and the people we serve"

From: Jim Starnes

'My fellow deadbeats . . . '

chicagotribune.com
Editorial
February 17, 2008

On Wednesday, Gov. Rod Blagojevich will propose a state budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. As our gift to a government that can't pay its bills on time, we offer the budget address Blagojevich should deliver:

Last year I caused quite a ruckus in Springfield. I suggested a big expansion of health coverage. And, to pay for it, I proposed the largest tax increase in our state's history.

Today I propose what ought to be a less-controversial agenda. Here's why I do so:

Governors enjoy nothing more than voicing pride in their states. We like to brag. But today I'm ashamed of Illinois. Just as every member of the General Assembly should be ashamed. We aren't paying long-overdue bills for the most sacred trusts we hold. We are delaying -- sometimes with terrible effects -- our payments to those who have, at our request, already provided survival care for our neediest, most helpless citizens.

We are failed leaders of Deadbeat Illinois.

Maybe that doesn't keep you up at night. Maybe you think we spend too much on Medicaid recipients. Maybe you resent a doctor who drives a car nicer than yours. Maybe you have a beef with some whiny social services agency in your district.

Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter at all.

Because we long ago told these providers...

No. Lousy word, "providers." It's clinical, like "associates" or "interest groups."

We told these people in our midst, these medical professionals and employees at caregiver organizations, that we want them to do work that isn't always pretty, for patients and clients who aren't always lovable.

We asked the doctors and hospitals and nursing homes who'll serve our Medicaid folks to treat bladders that leak, and wounds that bleed, and lungs that cough up mucus.

We said we wanted the agency employees to teach young folks with dreadful disabilities -- body and mind -- how to feed themselves. How to find genuine dignity in menial jobs that would bore any one of us luckier citizens to tears. How to get as close as they can to independent living -- something that, sadly, many of them can't fully achieve.

We also requested -- demanded, really -- that we get these services at steep discounts from what the market otherwise bears.

Good deal, right? Somebody else tends to our state's impoverished and disabled citizens -- in the name of us, the more fortunate people of Illinois. Aren't we ... noble?

Except, we delay payment for those services -- often for months. If the people who do our scut work can't meet their payrolls or pay their bills, tough. They can borrow.

Sure, we eventually pay them. But only after we've jerked them around -- for month upon month upon month.

We're a disgrace. We have no right to spend taxpayers' money on our golly-whiz new ideas until we pay for the care and services people already have delivered to the sick and disabled citizens we're sworn to protect.

The law doesn't give us many ways to skirt the Illinois Constitution's command that we balance our budget. We can, though, delay payments to the social services folks (and to other creditors as well) until two months past the end of the fiscal year. Better yet, we can stall Medicaid payouts -- indefinitely! -- into the next fiscal year. That is, we're required by law to pay most of the state's bills by Aug. 31, but whatever Medicaid bills we don't pay one year, we just kick into the next.

And we never catch up. By the time we finally pay off last year's Medicaid bills, this year's are already piling up. Unpaid.

I propose today that we end this humiliating payment scam, and the sorry reputation, of Deadbeat Illinois. Right now. As we prepare for fiscal 2009.

I'd love to propose a dozen -- a hundred -- new ways to spend taxpayers' money and make us look great in an election year.

But we can't live the good life, preening for the cameras, when we don't pay our bills. When we stiff medical and social services people who did what we asked them to do.

Why should they keep caring for our patients and disabled citizens? Good question. Why do we treat them this way? Because we can.

Dan Hynes, our state comptroller and my fellow Democrat, says we had a backlog of \$2.7 billion in unpaid bills on Jan. 1. He says we owed 61 percent of that for Medicaid and other social services care. My people think Dan's \$2.7 billion is a misleading number.

What's the correct amount? As I said earlier: Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter at all.

We owe a tremendous amount of money for the care given to our poor and disabled citizens. Dan says we finished fiscal 2007 with a \$3.6 billion deficit -- the worst of any state in the nation. Our holdover Medicaid bills accounted for most of that. Our budget for this year, fiscal 2008, will swim deep in red ink.

We've been scrapping over resources and it's only going to get worse. Dan waves a lot of graphics with frightening trend lines -- where our revenues and our fixed expenses are headed. No good news there.

But before we start squabbling about fiscal 2009, let's make a solemn pact. Let's agree that in '09 we won't spend one extra dollar -- on existing programs, on schools, on new ideas, on adding a single state trooper -- until we zero out our debts.

That pact will hold only if we make an unequivocal, rigid commitment and stick to it. We have to. How can we look taxpayers in the eye if we won't even do what every Illinois household this side of Bankruptcy Court has to do? If we won't pay our bills on time?

Many of us weren't in Springfield when the state began this shabby mistreatment of the people who care for our most vulnerable citizens. But we have to stop this.

The voters who elected us, trusted us, can continue to think of us as squabbling do-littles. Or they can see that, in 2008 and 2009, we fulfilled our obligations. Their obligations, really. They can see that when people serve the sick and disabled citizens of Illinois, this governor, and this legislature, won't creep around looking for reasons not to pay.

We're the stewards of Deadbeat Illinois. And our disgraceful record stops right here.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Liz Kelley, Employment Specialist in Pekin, has completed DSP training!

FROM OUR LONG TIME FRIEND, DAVID PTASZEK

We have heard from our long-time friend David Ptaszek in Hopkinsville Kentucky that he and his wife Barbara became proud grandparents of a healthy baby boy, Jake Allen Birmingham, on September 10, 2007! Jake and his parents, Carrisa and Jon Birmingham are all doing well! Congratulations to David & Barbara and Carrisa & Jon!

On a sad note we extend our Sympathy to David, Barbara and family on the passing of David's father, Frank H. Ptaszek (83) this past January 14th. Frank faced a lengthy battle with lung cancer. His life as a husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, friend and World War II veteran was celebrated through a eulogy expressed by his son David.

DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Deepest sympathy to Diana Duarte, Residential Assistant Michigan Manor Galesburg on the loss of her grandmother.

NAEIR

From Terry Nemeth

Rules apply to all members, new and old. When your organization becomes a member of NAEIR to receive free supplies, the items cannot be bartered, traded or sold in any way. Also, merchandise received, must be used for the care of the ill, needy or minors that are being served by your organization. You may use some items in the day to day operation of your facility. Please remember these rules when requesting these donated materials.



WELCOME DR. POGUE

WHEN: Thursday, February 28th
from 5 – 7 p.m.

WHERE: Bridgeway's Monmouth Office
301 Industrial Park Road
Monmouth, IL

You are invited to meet and welcome Bridgeway's new psychiatrist Dr. Pogue

COMING . . .

Cassie Stark, HCBS Outreach Worker Keokuk
Penni Stracker, Case Manager Macomb
Brandi Sutton, HCBS Outreach Worker Keokuk
Jodi Worley, Case Manager Galesburg
Sonya Smith, Residential Assistant Michigan Manor Galesburg

GOING . . .

Cindy Brumback, HCBS Outreach Worker Keokuk
Sue Nelson, Residential Coordinator Galesburg retired

FUND RAISER

From: Kristen Wertzler

Club will be hosting a fundraiser Friday, February 29th from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the kitchen in Galesburg. We will be selling hot dogs, bowls of chili, and chili dogs. All funds will go to the CLUB Summer Trip to Hannibal, Missouri.



HAPPY RETIREMENT SUE NELSON

Friday, February 22nd staff and consumers attended a retirement party for Sue Nelson, Residential Coordinator Galesburg. Sue has been a dedicated employee to Bridgeway for 21 years. Sue received a retirement gift from Bridgeway, flowers, cake, and a party which was enjoyed by everyone. Best wishes Sue on your retirement. Sue will be missed by the staff and consumers.

27 DAYS UNTIL SPRING!!!!!!!!!!!!

BTS ACTIVITES

From Tom Colclasure

- Illinoisans are submitting their IL-1040 forms earlier this year than they did each of the last 2 years. In order to process the quantity of forms being received at this time and meet our contract directives for the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDR), additional workers are being recruited in Galesburg to begin work ASAP, and the mail opening and sorting process start date for workers in Macomb is being “moved up” to begin next week.
- The Macomb School District #185 voted this week to approve the contract between the school district and BTS for confidential document destruction.
- In addition to regularly contracted work, the janitorial service cleaned carpets for the Check Into Cash Advance & Payday Loan Center in Macomb.
- There is a formal inspection of the Spoon River Rest Area this week, conducted by representatives of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). After IDOT assesses our janitorial and grounds maintenance work performance at this time, we will meet to discuss the specific items for inclusion (including activities and contract rates) into the fiscal year 2009 contract, which is currently being developed and will begin on July1, 2008.
- In addition to processing mail for the IDR contract, the Galesburg workshop completed several tissue paper packaging orders for the Dick Blick Company this week.
- The janitorial service submitted a bid to Getz Manufacturing to strip and wax its hard floor surfaces.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Rum Toffee Fudge

From Carolyn Davis, Records Dept. Galesburg

2 cups White Chocolate Chips
1 cup Milk Chocolate Chips
1 can Sweetened Condensed Milk
1 T. butter
¾ cup Heath Bites
1/8 tsp. Rum Flavoring

Stir altogether until melted. Pour into an 8" x 8" foil lined pan which has been buttered and refrigerate

JOB OPENINGS

Benefit Specialist - Galesburg
Program Support Specialist II - Kewanee
CDL Class A Driver - BTS Galesburg
Residential Manager - Macomb
Case Coordinator - Keokuk Workshop
Residential Coordinator - Galesburg
Employment Specialist – Kewanee
Nurse Clinician - Kewanee
HCBS Team Leader - Keokuk
BTS Data Entry Production Clerk - Macomb
HCBS Outreach Worker-Keokuk
Family Support Worker (Pooled Position) – Various Work Locations
Residential Assistants – Kewanee (Pooled Position)
Residential Assistant/DD - Macomb and Pekin
Residential Assistants, (Pooled Positions) – Bridgeway Residential Facilities