The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Office of Energy Assistance announces the beginning of the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) for the fall. LIHEAP is a state and federally funded energy assistance program for eligible low income families in which a benefit is paid directly to the utility companies on behalf of eligible households, or directly to renters if the utility costs are included in their rent.

Some LIHEAP clients will have the option of choosing between the traditional Direct Vendor Payment (DVP) plan or the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP). PIPP is available to eligible LIHEAP clients who are customers of ComEd and Nicor Gas only. Under PIPP, the eligible client will pay a percentage of their income toward their bill each month. In turn, they will receive a benefit towards their utility bill, and also receive a reduction in any overdue payments for every on-time payment they make. PIPP can assist in ways that will help customers manage their utility bills and break the cycle of disconnections and reconnections. The traditional DVP plan is a one-time payment only.

**NEEDED DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICANTS**

- State photo ID, i.e. Driver’s License or Illinois State ID
- Proof of gross income from all household members 18 years and older for the 30-day period prior to the application date
- A copy of current heat and electric bills, both front and back, that includes name and address, issued within the last 30 days (if they pay for their energy directly)
- If utilities are included in rent, a copy of rental agreement showing that utilities are included, the monthly rental amount and landlord contact information.
- Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members. If using a Social Security Card, it cannot be a copy. We will accept a print out from the Social Security office dated within the last 90 days. Birth certificates will be accepted in place of Social Security Cards for children under the age of 1 year.
- Proof that the household received TANF or other benefits, such as Medical Eligibility or SNAP, if receiving assistance from the Illinois Department of Human Services.
- If applying during the seniors and disabled sign up period, households must contain a member who is elderly (age 60 and above), or, if resident is under 60 and disabled, must bring in proof of social security disability benefits or benefits pending.
- If applying during the households with child(ren) under 5 sign up period, child must still be 4 yrs. on date of application; must prove age with birth certificate or Medicaid card with birthdate.
- In specific circumstances, additional documents may be requested.

**Seniors and Disabled Households**

- Tuesday Sept 4th
- Disconnected Households & Those with Children under 5
- Tuesday Oct. 2nd
- General Public
- Tuesday Nov. 6th

Newsletter Designer:
Michael Macocco
Don’t Get the Flu. Don’t Spread the Flu. Get Vaccinated.

Protect Yourself

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

Take time to get vaccinated.

♦ CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three flu viruses research indicates will be most common. The vaccine can protect you from getting sick from these three viruses or it can make your illness milder if you get a flu virus that is related to those in the vaccine.

Take everyday preventive actions.

♦ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze to keep from spreading flu viruses to others. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way. Avoid close contact with sick people. If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius. Follow this recommendation even if you are taking flu antiviral drugs. While sick, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

NEED A FLU SHOT? Contact your case manager!

Medicare Part D Open Enrollment

1) Between October 15 – December 7, anyone can join, switch, or drop a Medicare drug plan. The change will take effect on January 1 as long as the plan gets your request by December 7.

2) Once you choose a Medicare drug plan, you may be able to join by:

- Enrolling on the plan’s Web site or on www.medicare.gov
- Completing a paper application
- Calling the plan
- Calling 1-800-MEDICARE

When you join a Medicare drug plan, you’ll give your Medicare number and the date your Part A and/or Part B coverage started. This information is on your Medicare card.

3) If you have limited income and resources, you may qualify for Extra Help to pay for Medicare prescription drug coverage. Extra Help information is available at 1-800-772-1213 or located at http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp/.

Connectors

Todd Kisner - Project Director

Case Managers:

Tracy Box (815) 720-4084
Trish Paesani (815) 720-4086
Mike Macocco (815) 720-4085
Stacia Runge (815) 748-2449
Deb LeRoy (815) 626-2230
Marie McGinnis (309) 762-5433
Jean Dutton (309) 762-5433
How is HIV transmitted?
HIV is transmitted (spread) through the blood, semen, genital fluids, or breast milk of a person infected with HIV. The spread of the virus is called transmission of HIV.

Having unprotected sex or sharing drug injection equipment (such as needles and syringes) with a person infected with HIV are the most common ways HIV is transmitted.

Having a sexually transmitted disease (STD) can increase a person’s risk of becoming infected with HIV during sex. The risk of spreading HIV during sex is also more likely if the partner infected with HIV also has another STD.

Women infected with HIV can transmit the virus to their babies during pregnancy or childbirth or by breastfeeding. If you are a woman infected with HIV, talk to your health care provider about ways to prevent pregnancy. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, ask your health care provider how you can protect your baby from HIV. (See the HIV and Pregnancy fact sheets.)

I am taking anti-HIV medications and my viral load is undetectable. Can I still infect another person with HIV?
Your anti-HIV medications are doing a good job of controlling your infection. The amount of HIV in your blood is so low that a viral load test can't detect the virus. But having an undetectable viral load doesn't mean you're cured. You still have HIV. Although having an undetectable viral load greatly reduces the risk of HIV transmission, you can still infect another person with the virus.

How can I prevent transmitting HIV?
To prevent infecting another person with HIV:
• Use a condom every time you have sex.
• If you inject drugs, don't share your needles or syringes.
• Don't share your razor, toothbrush, or other items that may have your blood on them.
• Take your anti-HIV medications according to your health care provider's directions.
• If you are a mother infected with HIV, don't breastfeed your baby.

Talk to your health care provider about how HIV is transmitted and ways to prevent spreading the virus. At each visit, discuss any high-risk behaviors (such as having unprotected sex or sharing drug injection equipment). Ask your health care provider about testing for other STDs—for you and your partner.

Talking about high-risk behaviors can be difficult. But it's important to be honest with your health care provider about any high-risk activities. Your health care provider can help you take steps to reduce your chances of transmitting HIV to another person.

Can I put my HIV-infected partner at risk?
Even if your partner is also infected with HIV, it's important to use condoms and not share drug injection equipment. You and your partner may have different strains of the virus. Your partner's HIV could act differently in your body or cause the anti-HIV medications you take to be less effective. And your strain of HIV could have the same effects on your partner.

Where can I find more information about HIV prevention?
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) provides information about the prevention of HIV infection, other STDs, and tuberculosis (TB).

If you have questions about HIV transmission, call CDC-INFO at 1-800-232-4636 or visit http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/.

For more information:
Contact an AIDSinfo health information specialist at 1-800-448-0440 or visit http://aidsinfo.nih.gov. See your health care provider for medical advice.

Terms Used in This Fact Sheet:
Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs): Infections that are usually passed during sex. HIV is an example of an STD.
Transmission of HIV: The spread of HIV from a person infected with HIV to another person through the infected person's blood, semen, genital fluids, or breast milk.
Tuberculosis (TB): A disease caused by germs that spread through the air when a person with active TB coughs, sneezes, or talks. TB usually affects the lungs.
Undetectable viral load: When the amount of HIV in a person's blood is too low to be detected with a viral load test.
Unprotected sex: Sex without using a condom.
Viral load: The amount of HIV in the blood. One of the goals of antiretroviral therapy is to reduce viral load.

This information is based on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-1-Infected Adults and Adolescents (available at http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines). Reviewed August 2012.
Illinois New Criminal Transmission of HIV Law

On August 22nd, Governor Quinn signed SB3673, which dramatically changed Illinois’ HIV Criminal Transmission law. The new law is in effect.

What’s new:

1. The law used to cover “intimate contact.” Now it will be limited to “sexual activity without the use of a condom.” That means there should be no more criminal transmission cases that involve biting or spitting. It also means that there should be no more criminal transmission cases where a condom is used.

2. “Sexual activity” is defined as the insertive vaginal or anal intercourse on the part of an infected male, receptive consensual vaginal intercourse on the part of an infected woman with a male partner, or receptive consensual anal intercourse on the part of an infected man or woman with a male partner.” That means there should be no criminal transmission cases where there was only oral sex.

3. The law has always provided that disclosure is a defense (you tell someone you have HIV before you have sex and they say that’s okay) Now that would only be necessary if you are having unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse.

4. In those cases where sexual activity by people with HIV is still criminalized (anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom and without disclosure), the prosecutor can now seek records which would prove that the person knew they had HIV at the time of the offense. But those records must first be submitted to a judge who makes the determination whether they are relevant before they can be given to the prosecutors and used at trial.