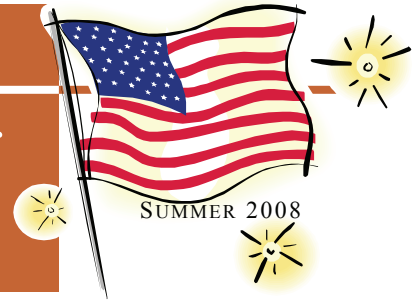


# INFO from The Coordinating Center



Before our next newsletter comes out you will all have had a chance to have a say in who is our next President. I can't encourage you enough to get out and get involved, especially by voting.

Over the years I have seen legislation implemented and reversed and re-vamped when people make their voices heard.

The Coordinating Center is co-sponsoring Voter Forums where you will be able to register, test the voting machines and get informed, energized and motivated to go to the polls. For more information contact the Maryland Disability Law Center by calling Kim Berney at 410-727-6352 ext. 2492

Articles on page three; *Update on Health Care Options* and *Help for Students with Disabilities* show just what change is possible when people work with their government to get the services they need.

So, make your voice heard. You have the right to vote and you also have the right to accessible voting.

—Karen-Ann Lichtenstein

*If you want to learn more about how the government works and how you can impact policy as it relates to people with disabilities, consider getting involved with **Leaders in Disability Policy**. This program at The Coordinating Center is offered once a year and is open to anyone interested in disability policy. You can find out more at [www.bealeader.info](http://www.bealeader.info).*

## Each Vote Matters

Voting is one of the easiest ways to make your voice heard. Voting gives you a say in who will be the officials making the laws and policies that directly affect your daily life. Don't be overlooked!

### Register by October 14

The General Election is on November 4. To vote you need to be registered and to register to vote in Maryland you must:

- *Be a United States citizen*
- *Be a Maryland resident*
- *Be at least 18 years old by the next General Election*
- *Not be under guardianship for a mental disability*
- *Not have been convicted of buying or selling votes*
- *Not have been convicted more than once of a crime of violence*

If you have been convicted of a felony, you are eligible to register once you have completed the court-ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation for the conviction. For the purposes of eligibility to register to vote, convictions include federal, state and out-of-state convictions.

### Register in Person

You can register to vote in person at your County Elections Office, the State Board of Elections or at a state agency such as the Motor Vehicle Administration, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Social Services, the Offices on Aging, the MTA paratransit certification office, and all public colleges.

### Register by Mail

You can also register by mail. Applications can be obtained by contacting the State Board of Elections.

### Vote in Person

- *Take your identification*
- *Find out if you will need assistance*

You can find out if your voting site is accessible by calling your local board of elections. If your site is not accessible, you should call or write to your County Board of Election.

### Maryland's Voting Machines are Accessible

Maryland has touch screen voting machines that are accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you have difficulty reading the ballot, you can request a magnified ballot or an audio ballot, which requires the use of headphones and a keypad. The angle of the voting machines can also be adjusted for greater access.

### Voting Assistance

You have the right to assistance when you go to vote. You also have the right to bring a person of your choice to assist you when voting.

### Mail in your vote

If you are unable to get to the polls on Election Day you may vote by absentee ballot. Contact your local board of elections to request an application for an absentee ballot.

### Board of Elections

For more information or to find your local or county board of elections contact:

Maryland State Board of Elections  
(410) 269-2840 / (800) 222-8683  
[www.elections.state.md.us](http://www.elections.state.md.us)

## Shedding Light on Energy Assistance

The Office of Home Energy Plans (OHEP) helps low-income Maryland citizens pay their heating bills, minimize heating crises, and make energy costs more affordable. A comprehensive energy package, which includes the Maryland Energy Assistance Program & the Electric Universal Service Program, has links to the community and the customer. These programs promote energy conservation, customer financial responsibility and energy independence.

You may apply for all of these energy assistance programs with a single application. For information or to obtain an application visit their website by clicking [here](#) or call 800-352-1446. (For the hearing impaired, 800-925-4434).

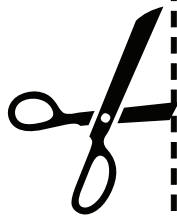
### SAVING ENERGY SAVING MONEY

*Did you know that appliances and electronics can consume energy even when they are turned off? To save money and energy unplug your VCR, televisions, stereo, computer and other appliances when they are not in use. Consider putting the plugs on a power strip and switching it off before you leave the house.*

## Preparing for Disaster: How to Weather the Storm

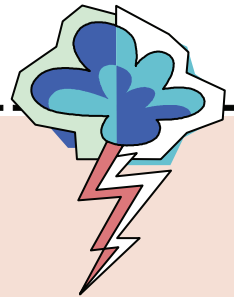
Emergencies and disasters can strike quickly and without warning forcing you to evacuate your neighborhood or confining you to your home. The more prepared you are, the better you will be able to weather the storm. More information can be found at the Red Cross, by clicking [here](#).

And for people with diabetes click [here](#) to visit the website for American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.



### HAVE THESE ITEMS ON HAND WHERE EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD CAN FIND THEM:

- First aid supplies
- Flashlight
- Battery-operated radio with extra batteries
- List of Drs. with phone numbers
- Copies of health insurance cards and health records
- 30-day supply of medication
- 7-day supply of any special nutritional supplements you need like Ensure, Boost or infant formula
- Information about any health conditions
- Three-day supply of bottled water
- Disaster plan for your family that includes an out-of-town contact



## Missed a Mortgage Payment?

Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition is preserving and strengthening homeownership and promoting neighborhood stability by preventing foreclosures. They have trained professional housing counselors that can give you sound advice, contact your lender and connect you with local housing counselors at various Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition member sites. The service is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Working with a housing counselor and your lender

Gather your loan documents and think about the questions that you may be asked in advance. Chances are, your lender will want to work with you and help you find a way to keep your home.

### Nothing is worse than doing nothing

Ignoring problems with your mortgage will not make them go away. The longer you wait, the less likely you can be helped. Call 888-995-HOPE as soon as you think you may be late on your payments. You can find more information on their website, by clicking [here](#).

## Update on Health Care Options

### Medicaid Expanded

The Medical Assistance for Families Program is a new health insurance program that expands Medicaid coverage. It will be phased in over four years. The first phase began on July 1, 2008. Medical Assistance for Families now offers Maryland families earning up to \$24,600 (for a family of four) full health coverage. The next phase will begin in 2009 and will benefit single, childless adults earning \$12,000 or less.

If you have questions or would like to apply, call Baltimore HealthCare Access at 410-649-0500 or visit them online at by clicking [here](#).

### More Prescription Help

Wal-Mart Stores will offer 90-day prescriptions of some generics for \$10, add several women's medications at a discount and lower the prices of more than 1,000 over-the-counter medications to \$4 or less.

While Wal-Mart was the first to roll out \$4 prescriptions for generics other stores are now following suit. You can also get \$4 prescriptions at Safeway and Target.

### Insuring Adult Children

Effective January 1, 2008 children under the age of 25 who are unmarried, living at home for 6 months out of the year and predominantly supported by their parent can be covered under their parents' health plan regardless of student status. Young adults do not need to be claimed as dependents on a family's income taxes in order for them to be eligible for coverage.

Talk to your employer to see if you think this change in coverage applies to you.

*Note: This provision does not apply to Maryland Small Group Reform plans.*

## Help for Students with Disabilities

### Prone Restraints Banned

The Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) has banned the use of prone restraints in its programs for students with emotional disabilities effective June 2, 2008.

Prone restraint involves laying someone face-down, often with pressure on the person's back. This is an extremely unsafe form of restraint, and thankfully, is now banned in Maryland.

*"In Maryland we believe that everyone should have the chance to grow and develop to their highest potential," said Governor O'Malley.*

### Athletic Opportunities

Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law the Fitness and Athletics Equity for Students with Disabilities Act. It requires local school systems to develop policies and procedures for students with disabilities who wish to try out for or participate in physical education and athletic programs.

### Protection Against Bullying

The Public Schools – Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation – Policy and Disciplinary Standards was also signed into law. It requires the State Department of Education to develop a policy prohibiting bullying, intimidation and harassment in schools throughout all 23 counties and Baltimore City.

### Family Support Services

If you are looking for services for a child with disabilities, Family Support Services is a good place to start. This organization provides information about community supports, opportunities to network with other families and help with transitioning your child through each phase of their development from birth to adulthood.

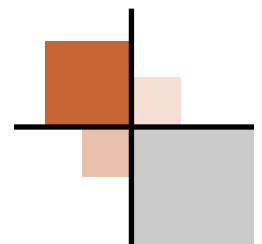
Contact Pam Miller, Family Support Services Coordinator

Maryland State Dept. of Education  
410-767-1019 or 800-535-0182 or visit their website by clicking [here](#).

### Nonpublic School Alternatives

The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) is a not-for-profit organization of non-public special education facilities approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. These facilities, throughout Maryland, promote quality services for children and youth with disabilities. They serve more than 4,500 students between 3 - 21 years of age.

MANSEF is committed to creating optimum educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all Maryland children and youth with disabilities. To locate a school or learn more contact MANSEF at 410-938-4413 or via email [email](#) or visit them on the web by clicking [here](#).





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www.coordinatingcenter.org

*The mission of The Coordinating Center is to partner with families, children and adults with special health care needs and disabilities and those who support them in the community to achieve their aspirations for independence, health, inclusion and quality of life.*



**NEW CO-WORKERS**

**Amerigroup**  
**Julie Elliott**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*

**LAH**  
**Andrea Thomas**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Angela Gustus**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Jenna Lank**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Kristy Cordrey**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Natalia Cusmano**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Shannon Donohue**  
*Service Coordinator*

**REM**  
**Barbara Poole**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*  
**Carrie Babylon**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*  
**Jennifer Barry**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*  
**Denise Mattern**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*  
**Victoria Cearfoss**  
*Clinical Care Coordinator*

**Administration**  
**Noel Fullerton**  
*Receptionist*



The holidays will be upon us sooner than we think. Please take a minute and think about the extra help you may need during that time. Contact the Department of Social Services. They can help you make arrangements so that you will have the services you need during the holidays.

## Client Spotlight

When Lucienda Harris' knees gave out, her ironing board was just the first thing that came crashing down around her. By the time she had recovered from bilateral knee replacements, her worker's compensation had run out, she was on social security and had lost her two jobs, her house, her car, her furniture and some of her friends. Many serious health issues that she had managed to keep at bay became debilitating and Lucienda ended up needing the level of care that she could only find in a nursing home. During the two years she was in the nursing home Lucienda did not give up her desire to live in the community. She moved in with her brother and his large family. Her room was the dining room where her hospital bed took up most of the space. It was during this trying time

with stress in her family relationships that she found out about the Living at Home Waiver Program. Lucienda has been on the Living at Home Waiver since July of 2002. She has a place of her own and control over who provides her care. She chose her son (Dwight) to provide her attendant care. He comes every day to help her get up and get on with the day. Lucienda is serving on the Mental Health Advisory Board at The Family Services Agency, Inc. Priscilla Lis-sik, her Service Coordinator from The Coordinating Center, helps her get the supports and services she needs to live in the community.



Luceinda says, "Losing your dignity is a hard thing. It has been a slow process to re-build this, but I am doing it each day, a step at a time."

"Lucienda is a remarkable person. She has overcome some tremendous obstacles. The Living at Home Waiver has really been a good way for her to get her life back,"-Priscilla.