

March 2003

CCDJFS

# E-Alert

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

## Vital Statistics

**Children under our protection who remain in their own home**

December 2002 **403**

**Children under our protection who are in our custody**

December 2002 **203**

**Children receiving a subsidy for child care**

December 2002 **770**

**Families receiving on-going cash assistance**

January 2002	July 2002	December 2002
<b>674</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>711</b>

**Individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid**

January 2002	July 2002	December 2002
<b>21,713</b>	<b>22,428</b>	<b>23,345</b>

**Individuals receiving food stamps**

January 2002	July 2002	December 2002
<b>11,620</b>	<b>11,975</b>	<b>13,493</b>

**Individuals receiving job training assistance**

December 2002 **311**

**Individuals paying on child support orders**

December 2002 **7,927**



## Cash Assistance Groups on Slow Rise

The number of Clark County residents receiving monthly assistance through the state's cash assistance program, Ohio Works First, grew slightly in 2002. This was the first year that OWF rolls in the county increased since the implementation of welfare reform in 1997. As the economy stalled in 2002, the number of OWF cases increased 6.9% over the preceding year, but remained down 52.1% from 1997.

As of December 2002, there were 2,512 individuals receiving cash assistance in Clark County. Most of them -- 1,853, or 73.7% -- were children under the age of 18.

## Work First Approach is Working!

One of the basic goals of welfare reform is to move people receiving cash assistance into the workforce as quickly as possible. The logic behind this approach is that obtaining a job and bringing home a paycheck is the most significant step for most people to achieve self sufficiency.

Benefits from working go far beyond a paycheck. People feel better about themselves when they work. Their self esteem improves, they serve as a positive role model to their children, and they prepare themselves to move up the wage scale by adding work experience to their resumes.

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## Work First Approach is Working! (continued)

In Clark County, there has been a significant change in the number of people working and receiving Food Stamps or support services as they have moved off the cash assistance rolls. In December 2002, there were 1,652 households receiving Food Stamps that also had earned income. This figure represents an increase of nearly 70% over December 2000! Even among those still dependent on cash assistance, there are more people working. Approximately 20% of adults on cash assistance are working at least part time.

## Child Care Update

One of the core supportive services used by our consumers is publicly-funded child care. The program is designed to subsidize child care costs for consumers in employment or education activities based on income guidelines.

During the month of December 2002, we had 770 children in the program. The total cost of the child care service was \$215,148.36. Families were responsible for co-paying approximately 13% of the total cost. The average number of hours a child received care during the month was 177.

Of these children, 92% of their families are under 150% of the poverty level.

The families utilize in-home certified providers or licensed child care centers by the state of Ohio. Approximately 65% of the cost of care was provided by licensed centers.

For more information, contact the Child Care unit at 327-1803.

## National Medical Support Notice

Many employers in Ohio have begun receiving the National Medical Support Notice. This is a new federal tool designed to enforce medical support orders for minor children. The goal is to have children throughout the United States enrolled in employment-related insurance coverage.

In Ohio, the Notices are being sent to employers when the new hire reporting process leads to the discovery of new employment for parents ordered to provide health insurance coverage for their children. In some cases, the insurance available for both parents will need to be examined to determine which policy is available at the most reasonable cost. In some cases, policies may be carried by both

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Virginia Martycz



Kerry Pedraza



Ellen Carey



Hugh Barnett

## Clark CDJFS Announces Appointments

The appointments of four staff members to key positions have been announced by the department.

**Virginia Martycz** was appointed Deputy Director for Child Support Enforcement. **Kerry Pedraza** was appointed Director of Personnel Resources. **Ellen Carey** was named Assistant Deputy Director for Child Support Enforcement. **Hugh Barnett** was appointed Director of Business Involvement.

The appointments were announced in a press release to local media on February 21.

## *National Medical Support Notice* (continued)

parents. Employers are to determine if costs are reasonable by using the guidelines set forth in the Consumer Protection Act.

Ohio currently is finalizing the implementation rules for compliance with this new process. Employers will be required to complete the forms mailed to them by the state. Employers with questions should contact the Child Support Enforcement Customer Service line at 327-3662.

## *Keeping Children Close to Home is First Priority of Family and Children Services*

In any given month, about 200 or more Clark County children are in substitute care. In January of this year, for instance, 165 of those children were in various placement resources in Clark County, while another 66 children were in placement resources outside of the county.

For all of these children, and for all who come under the jurisdiction of Family and Children Services each year, the biggest goal is to place them within Clark County and as close to their homes of origin as possible.

Children progress better when they remain in surroundings familiar to them -- like their schools, with therapists and with other service providers. It allows them to

maintain closer ties with friends and relatives. Locally-based placements offer more opportunities for family members and the community to have input into decisions about services to those children. And no less important, the department incurs lower costs when children are placed in the community as a result of reduced travel times, lower mileage costs and greater capacity to monitor those placements.

## *WorkPlus Transportation Services a Key Component to WorkPlus' Success, Other Needs*

The WorkPlus transportation vans have been a common site in Clark County for more than three years. Conceived originally as a system to transport participants in the Medicaid program to dialysis and doctors' appointments, it was soon determined that excess capacity could be utilized for other purposes. Today, customers also utilize the WorkPlus vans as a means of getting to work or to appointments with social service agencies. And through a partnership with the Clark County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, many MR/DD customers are also served. In 2002, the WorkPlus transportation system provided almost 74,000 trips. While 30% of those trips were health related, more than a quarter were employment-related trips.

WorkPlus is a direct response, point-to-point transportation service that operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week, including holidays. Ohio Works First participants, Medicaid customers, and other low-income residents, have access to dependable, on-time, and safe transportation to and from work, to work activities, to child care centers, or to health care providers. In most instances, transportation is authorized for up to 90 days.

Eligibility is determined by the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services. Once transportation is authorized, the customer is assigned a unique personal identification number (PIN). He/she then calls a centralized scheduler/dispatcher to arrange transportation.

For more information about this valuable transportation resource, contact Mike Besecker at the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services, 327-1920.

### **Clark County Department of Job and Family Services**

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