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For immediate release

DHHR curtails child care services, cuts grants

Officials at the Bureau for Children and Families, the Bureau within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources that administers services for children and families such as foster care, SNAP benefits and child care, say eligibility for child care services will change beginning Aug. 1.

Families currently receiving services will continue to receive services at this time, some with an increase in copayments. There will be no reduction in provider rates, and there will be no changes in payment for days of care. Changes will continue into 2013.

Effective Aug. 1, copayments will increase from the current rate of five percent to 12 percent for services provided. Eligibility for new applicants enrolling in the child care program will be frozen except for families receiving cash assistance through the WVWORKS, foster families, families receiving child care because of a child protective service case and families receiving court-ordered child care.

After Jan 1, 2013, those families determined to have income above 150 percent of the poverty level will no longer be eligible for a state child care subsidy when they receive their redeterminations from the Bureau for Children and Families.

This means a family of four with an income greater than \$2,794 a month would no longer be eligible for a child care supplement. Families can currently receive a child care supplement if their income falls from 150-185 percent of the federal poverty level. These redeterminations occur every six months from the initial date of eligibility.

Child care is the direct care and protection of children during a portion of a 24-hour day outside of the children's own home that provide experiences for children that foster healthy development and education. "Children" are considered to be less than 13 years of age. The definition is extended to those 18 years of age who are under current supervision or have significant developmental delays.

In State Fiscal Year 2011, which ended June 30, 2011, more than 24,000 children received child care services at an estimated total federal and state cost of approximately \$54 million. This has grown from more than 23,000 children served in 2009 at a total federal and state cost of nearly \$45 million.

State general revenue appropriations to child care have remained constant for the past three years at \$5,693,743 per year. State general revenue funds have been supplemented by carrying over federal TANF funds. The state receives \$110 million each year in TANF funds from the federal government and for several years did not spend the entire appropriation each

year. Beginning in 2008, there was \$58 million in TANF carryover funds. These have been steadily used to pay for both child care and social services, and they are now gone.

The Bureau for Children and Families is also cutting more than \$9.5 million in grants. These include a \$2.5 million grant to the West Virginia Department of Education for expansion of a summer nutrition program and 14 grants totaling approximately \$5.5 million to regional workforce investment boards to fund subsidized employment for adults and youth. These grants were funded through American Recovery Act Funding. That money is no longer available. It expired Sept. 30, 2010.

A \$762,000 grant to the West Virginia University Research Corporation and a \$149,469 grant to the West Virginia State Research and Development Corporation were not funded because the information from the data collected was inconclusive as to whether or not it helped foster and strengthen two-parent families, as was its original intention. In addition, an \$862,168 grant to the WVU Research and Development Corporation for vocational assessment was not funded. After reviewing data from the grant, BCF staff concluded it was not meeting expectations to place individuals into employment.

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