



Bringing People and Services Together

Air Waves

Wisconsin's Information Network

-- Winter 2010 --



WisconsinAIRS is a statewide, non-profit professional association of Information & Referral (I&R) and Information and Assistance (I&A) organizations and individuals. The association is dedicated to developing and maintaining a high quality, coordinated information and referral network for Wisconsin and is an affiliate of AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems), the national organization.

Our mission is to promote the information and referral profession and support professionals engaged in Information & Referral and

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Focus on Mental Health

We are all affected by issues of mental health -- whether our own or that of those around us. Maybe we're having a "blue day." Maybe we work with clients whose daily life activities are influenced by the effects of a diagnosed mental illness. Or maybe these effects carry over to their (or our) friends and families.

For this issue, *Air Waves* suspends its usual practice of highlighting three or four useful resources in order to focus in depth on just one. *The National Alliance on Mental Illness - Wisconsin* has programs which may be of use to every reader in their professional and personal life -- either now or in the future.

Also in this issue:

- ❖ "ABC's of I&R" -- coming to a library near you
- ❖ Certification exams and study group dates announced
- ❖ MANY websites
- ❖ 2-1-1 Wisconsin -- updates

Please share this issue with co-workers and agencies that may benefit from this information and/or who may benefit from membership in WisconsinAIRS.



The President's Message --

****FAREWELL to Matricia Patterson as she takes a new position and leaves the profession of I&R.**

****WELCOME to Julie Seeman as she steps into the Presidency of WisconsinAIRS!!!!**

I want to thank WisconsinAIRS for nominating me to lead the organization in its first President-Elect position, and then as its President. As I prepare to leave this post, I am grateful to WisconsinAIRS Members for the opportunity to assist in organization's growth. I take great pride in knowing that WisconsinAIRS Board dreamed of what WisconsinAIRS could become and reached insurmountable goals.

My inspiration has been the talented and dedicated WisconsinAIRS Board Members. They are strong advocates of the standards set forth by the Alliance of information and Referral Systems (AIRS), and they have a genuine interest in WisconsinAIRS' continuity and survival. The

WisconsinAIRS Board takes pride in its current success and has plans for further achievement.

As your former President, I look to hear that WisconsinAIRS gains further national recognition for innovative ideas that enhance the AIRS standards (certification study groups, newsletter, conference), while remaining #1 in memberships and certifications. Please welcome and congratulate Julie Seeman, our new WisconsinAIRS President!

Matricia Patterson, MSW, MSM
WisconsinAIRS Past President
Manager, Social Development Commission
(SDC) - Family Support Center Shelter

I want to thank Matricia for her leadership as President of WisconsinAIRS. I hope that I will be able to follow in her footsteps and continue the success and forward movement WisconsinAIRS has achieved.

Currently, I am an Information and Assistance Specialist and a CIRS-A with Rock County Council on Aging in Janesville. I have been in my position 10 years and with my county 20 years. I have been a WisconsinAIRS member for nine years and on the Executive Board for three years. I have worked on the Conference Committee for four years.

I look forward to leading the organization in goals prioritized in our strategic plan and continuing our mission of:

1. Working together to generate and share ideas and resources around a common set of professional concerns;
2. Promote adherence to AIRS standards for delivery of information and referral and encourage coordination among information and referral providers in Wisconsin;
3. Encourage professional growth and competence through education, training, and consultation;

4. Share information about legislative and administrative policies pertinent to information and referral service delivery;
5. Promote public awareness and understanding of the role and function of information and referral services as a vital link between service seekers and service providers;
6. Take an active role in planning for information and referral service delivery in Wisconsin through participation in task forces, study groups, and public meetings concerned with assuring the accessibility of human services and by participation in the public hearing process as it affects human service delivery;
7. Enhance and support the goals of AIRS.

The next WisconsinAIRS Board meeting will be on March 19, 2010 at the WisconsinAIE House in Waupaca at 10:00 a.m.

With Warm Regards,
Julie Seeman



The Alliance for the Mentally Ill (AMI) began in Madison, Wisconsin in 1977 as a spontaneous grassroots family movement, at the same time that approximately 50 other family groups had organized independently in communities across the country. In response to an obvious need for support for families of people with serious mental illnesses in our country, 284 representatives from 59 groups (representing 29 states) came to Madison, Wisconsin in September, 1979, to launch the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Now based in Arlington, Virginia, NAMI has over 1000 local affiliate groups comprised of consumers, family members, and friends of people with mental illness.

The Alliance for the Mentally Ill (AMI) of Wisconsin, an affiliate of NAMI National, was incorporated in 1981, and now has 35 local affiliates representing the majority of the counties across the state. NAMI Wisconsin's mission is to improve the quality of life for those affected by mental illness through education, support, and advocacy and to promote recovery.

For twenty-five years, NAMI Wisconsin has been the premiere voice on mental illness in the state of Wisconsin. NAMI Wisconsin has developed a firm understanding of the needs of persons affected by mental illness. One powerful need is always education. By providing people with information they are empowered, and enlightened. NAMI Wisconsin has a long history of successfully providing educational opportunities for its members, and the public-at-large. One of the most often voiced needs of families affected by mental illness is education and access to information. NAMI Wisconsin's instructional portfolio contains a multitude of training and educational programs that ensure the various informational needs of their members are met.

Seven programs to help you and your clients:

- ◆ Family-to-Family Program
- ◆ NAMI Basics education Program
- ◆ Peer-to-Peer
- ◆ NAMI Support Groups
- ◆ NAMI Connection
- ◆ In OUR Own Voice (IOOV)
- ◆ Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training

***** Family-to-Family Program *****

The **Family-to-Family Education Program** is a comprehensive 12-week course for families of individuals with severe mental illness designed to foster learning, healing, and empowerment within those families. Trained family members teach the course.

What does the course include?

- Extensive information about the major mental illnesses and co-occurring addictive disorders and up-to-date information about medications, side effects, and strategies for medication adherence
- Empathy training for understanding the lived experience of a person living with mental illness and special workshops for problem solving, listening, and communication techniques
- Focus on care for the caregiver; coping with worry, stress, and emotional overload, and guidance on locating appropriate supports and services within the community

Family-to-Family Program Close-up:

A recent study on the effectiveness of the Family-to-Family Education program demonstrated a number of significant positive impacts on class members. The study, undertaken by the UW-Madison School of Social Work under the direction of former NAMI Wisconsin Board of Directors member, Jan Greenberg, PhD, featured a detailed questionnaire that was distributed to Family-to-Family class members from six NAMI Wisconsin affiliates.

Individuals filled out the questionnaire before beginning the twelve week course and again following the completion of the course. The first set of questions asked about participants’ knowledge of mental illness and its treatment. For example, participants were asked about their knowledge of different diagnoses, medications, and mental health services. The next set of questions concerned the respondent’s feelings of empowerment. There were 33 statements asking about different ways that the participants in Family-to-Family might feel a greater sense of control and empowerment in coping with their relative’s illness as a result of participating in this educational program. A third part of the questionnaire asked about feelings of caregiver burden. These questions asked about the extent that providing support to their loved one was stressful, created conflicts in the family, caused financial strains and so forth. In the final section of the questionnaire participants reported on the extent to which their lives had been positively transformed as a result of coping with their relative’s illness.

Over 100 people participated in this evaluation, with the majority being women (73%). Many were parents (65%) but over 20% were either a spouse or sibling of the loved one with mental illness. They were, on average, 52 years old. About 40% lived with their loved one with mental illness.

The participants in Family-to-Family reported many positive changes as a result of attending Family-to-Family. They reported a significant increase in knowledge of mental illness and its treatment, in feeling an increased sense of empowerment and personal growth, as well as a significant decrease in “levels of family burden.” A similar study done by the

Center of Mental Health Services Research, University of Maryland, and reported in an article, “Benefits and Changes for Family-to-Family Graduates,” by researchers Lucksted, Stewart and Forbes cited comparable results.

Asked for her reaction to the findings in the UW Madison study, Gail Auerbach, State Director of Family-to-Family Programs, said, “Participants and teachers always felt Family-to-Family taught insight and understanding that truly empowered those dealing with mental illness. This study confirms our views, and that’s very empowering as well!” She added, “Dr. Joyce Burland, clinical psychologist, and parent and sister to individuals with schizophrenia, developed this curriculum especially to help alleviate family burden when dealing with mental illness. She succeeded.”

**** NAMI Basics Education Program ****

The **NAMI Basics Education Program** is the signature education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illnesses. The program recognizes mental illness as a continuing stressful event for the child and the family and provides information and practical tips for understanding and dealing with the changes within a family. Trained family members teach the course.

What does the course include?

- Six 2.5 hour classes of instructional material, discussions and interactive exercises offered in a series of weekly classes, or on consecutive Saturdays, to accommodate the time constraints of families with children
- Sensitivity to the emotional issues faced by family caregivers and well children in the family; strategies for gaining confidence and stamina for family understanding and support; empowerment of family caregivers as effective advocates for children

*** Peer-to-Peer ***

Peer-to-Peer is a unique, experiential learning program for people with any serious mental illness who are interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery.

What does the course include?

- Ten two-hour classes taught by a team of two trained “Mentors” who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness
- A binder of materials for course participants as well as many other tangible resources: an advance directive; a “relapse prevention plan” to help identify tell-tale feelings, thoughts, behaviors, or events that may warn of impending relapse; mindfulness exercises to help focus and calm thinking; and self-advocacy skills for working with providers and the general public

*** NAMI Support Groups ***

NAMI Support Groups are peer “work groups” of people who are joined together for mutual understanding and support for coping with serious and persistent mental illness. These structured groups, led by trained facilitators, are often organized by the relationship to the relative with mental illness, for example, parents, spouses, or siblings. Other support groups are consumer-run and offer a safe and caring environment in which to discuss issues related to living with mental illness.

How does a Support Group operate?

- Groups meet at various locations: NAMI local affiliate offices, churches, schools, or places of business.
- Attendance at **NAMI Support Groups** is optional and confidential. People are free to attend whenever they feel the need, and new participants are always welcome.
- People gain help and information in a **Support Group** from peers who have lived experience.

*** NAMI Connection ***

NAMI Connection uses the NAMI Connection Principles of Support to provide support for people living with mental illness. People learn from each other’s experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding. NAMI Connection groups offer a casual and relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with serious mental illness.

How does a NAMI Connection group operate?

- Groups meet weekly for 90 minutes at one location: NAMI local affiliate offices, churches, schools, or places of business.
- Meetings follow a flexible structure without an educational format.
- NAMI Connection groups do not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies.
- Attendance is optional and confidential. People are free to attend whenever they feel the need, and new participants are always welcome.
- **NAMI Connection** groups are run by trained facilitators living with mental illnesses who are at a point in recovery where they can “give back” to others.
- Everyone is a valued participant.

NAMI Connection Program Close-up:

For NAMI members familiar with the NAMI Support Group model, some of the differences between that model and the NAMI Connection model include: Connection groups meet weekly rather than once or twice a month; Connection has a Support Group Emergency Procedures section; Connection has the Problem Solving Process included in every training; Connection has added one **Principle of Support** and changed two of the **Principles of Support**:

1. We will see the individual first, not the illness.
2. We recognize that mental illnesses are medical illnesses that may have environmental triggers.

3. We understand that mental illnesses are *traumatic* events.
4. We aim for better coping skills.
5. We find strength in sharing experiences.
6. We reject stigma and do not tolerate discrimination.
7. We don't judge anyone's pain as less than our own.
8. We forgive ourselves and reject guilt.
9. We embrace humor as healthy.
10. We accept that we cannot solve all problems.
11. We expect a better future in a realistic way.
12. We will never give up hope!

Connection Facilitators send in data postcards after each group to help with identifying demographics of Connection groups. Connection groups are listed on the national website www.nami.org/connection and have assigned Field Managers who host monthly facilitator calls.

Another new component of the NAMI Connection program is the use of Champions to work with facilitators and local affiliates to distribute NAMI Connection marketing materials to agencies, mental health centers, and other local locations. Champions may also identify sites for NAMI Connection support groups and may identify potential champions and support group facilitators, as well.

For a concise overview of the program the NAMI Connection outreach video can be found on YouTube. To view the outreach video, along with six brief testimonials from NAMI Connection participants, go to NAMI's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/NAMIVideo>.

***** In Our Own Voice (IOOV) *****

In Our Own Voice (IOOV) is a unique, informational outreach program developed by NAMI that offers hope and insight into the recovery now possible for people with severe mental illness, and dispels the myths surrounding these brain disorders.

In Our Own Voice shows how people with serious

mental illnesses reclaim productive lives with meaning and dignity while coping with the realities of their disorders. Consumers of mental health services hone their public speaking skills and share the ups and downs of their recovery process in these powerful and educational presentations.

What does the program include?

- Two trained presenters give personal testimony about their journeys with mental illness.
- Presenters discuss their passages through dark days, acceptance, treatment, coping skills, and successes, hopes, and dreams.
- Target audiences include: consumers, families, mental health service providers, educators, students, law enforcement personnel, professionals, faith communities, and all people wanting to become educated about mental illness.

In Our Own Voice Program Close-up:

NAMI Wisconsin's *In Our Own Voice* program continues to be one of the strongest in the nation. While Wisconsin is 20th among the 50 states in population, they finished 2009 in 3rd place in the nation in number of *IOOV* presentations given. Between January 1st and December 31st, 2009, over 2,500 of Wisconsin's citizens had their minds opened by the *IOOV* presenters' courageous sharing of their stories of recovery.

An article in the November, 2008 issue of Mental Health Weekly, "NAMI Self-Disclosure Program Helps Promote Recovery," notes, "Many consumers involved in the program convey a strong sense of wanting to serve the greater good."

A vital part of every *In Our Own Voice* program is the audience evaluation. Presenters are reminded in their training that the audience feedback is essential to provide data for the continued financial support for the program, but is also a great confidence booster.

All audience evaluations are submitted to the state coordinator, read and filed. Many presenters keep a copy of their audience evaluations to continue to improve their presentations, but, more importantly, to

keep a written reminder of the tremendous effect the presentation has on audiences.

A catalogue of audience comments from last year’s presentations reveals the depth of the impact of the *IOOV* program. A college student studying psychology commented, “Hearing an individual narrate through every stage of their struggle is important, inspiring and heart wrenching.” College and high school students are some of the program’s most essential audiences. A high school student said, “I am walking away from this presentation with a better understanding of mental illness.”

Professionals in many walks of life also have their minds opened by the *IOOV* program. A Wisconsin police officer noted, “It seemed to me that *Acceptance* was the most difficult step and the most important. When one reaches acceptance, they have taken the first step to recovery.” A presentation at the UW Madison School of Social Work was well received. Presenter, Mary Cassidy, reported, “The students were studying stigma and asked good questions.”

The one-to-one human connection with all kinds of audiences makes *IOOV* a unique and powerful program. No two presentations will ever be the same. State trainer and long-time presenter, Mary Balzar, noted on one of her presenter forms, “My audience said nice things, and laughed a lot, and clapped.” Even in the face of life’s greatest difficulties, there is a need for laughter and for the power of stories.

***** Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training *****

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training is a program for law enforcement based on the Memphis Model of CIT. Nationally recognized for its effectiveness, CIT training helps law enforcement personnel learn to recognize basic signs and symptoms of mental illness and use de-escalation techniques to avert crisis situations and improve outcomes.

What does the course include?

- A comprehensive five day, 40 hour training
- 25 hours of classroom training
- 15 hours of experiential training through tours of community sites, ride-along experiences with human service workers, and role playing scenario training

Crisis Intervention Partners is a similar program offered as a two day workshop for service providers.

Crisis Intervention Team Close-up:

NAMI Fox Valley, with support from the Appleton Police Department, and coordination from the Criminal Justice Center for Innovation at Fox Valley Technical College has been hosting **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)** training for law enforcement for a number of years.

The comprehensive five-day, 40 hour training session is designed to assist law enforcement officers and other first responders in recognizing and understanding the signs and symptoms of mental illness including depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders. The training also covers: options to facilitate de-escalation of the mental health consumer in crisis; community resources for consumers and their families; the ways this program reduces the potential for crisis and/or injury to the consumer, the officer, and others.

For further information about NAMI Wisconsin, its programs, services and affiliates’ activities, log on to the NAMI Wisconsin web site at

www.namiwisconsin.org

or call the NAMI Wisconsin office at 608-268-6000 or 800-236-2988.

Information about NAMI National may be accessed at their web site,

www.nami.org.

It may make a difference to all eternity whether we do right or wrong today. James Freeman Clarke

“The ABCs of I&R” -- now on loan at your library

The *ABC's of I&R*, a 500+ page publication, is the foundation for training all Information & Referral (or Information & Assistance) Specialists and Resource Specialists. It is an invaluable aid for preparing existing staff for AIRS certification examinations. The *ABCs* contains over 20 sections on the I&R / I&A process (from greeting to closure), advocacy and empowerment, follow-up, crisis intervention, confidentiality, challenging inquirers. Several sections are devoted to specific populations. And several detail the structure and use of a resource database.



Are you or your staff preparing to take the AIRS certification exam? Are you or your staff in training for I&R / I&A positions -- or in need of refresher training. Then the *ABC's* is the number one resource for you.

From a library near you!

WisconsinAIRS has obtained placed copies of the *ABC's of I&R* with the Wisconsin Reference and Loan Library. Go to your local library to order by submitting an interlibrary loan request. The *ABCs* will be shipped to your library for you to pick up.



****** Announcing! ******

AIRS Conference
(Alliance of Information and Referral Systems)
May 23 – 26, 2010

The I&R world will next gather together for the AIRS Conference in Rochester, New York, from May 23rd to May 26th 2010. BE THERE!!

Please mark your calendars and plan your budget so you can attend the 31st I&R Conference at the spacious Rochester Conference Center. There are two fantastic hotels: the Hyatt Rochester and the Radisson Riverside. Both have affordable low rates of \$132 single/double beds and both are directly connected to the Conference Center. The deadline for the AIRS discounted rate is April 26, 2010. See the AIRS website at <http://www.airs.org> for more information. The conference packet will soon be posted.

Save the date

WisconsinAIRS **31st Annual Conference**

October 21-22, 2010
Hotel Sierra and KI Convention Center
Green Bay
Watch for conference
details and workshops

AIRS Certification Exams and “Get Started Studying” Groups

AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) awards professional credentials to individuals who successfully complete the AIRS Certification exams for I&R/A practitioners. *For information about the exams and how to register to take an exam go to www.airs.org. You must register with AIRS in order to take the exam.*

WisconsinAIRS sponsors these exams in Wisconsin and provides study groups prior to the exams. Listed below is the exam and study group schedule for the beginning of 2010. Please note the study groups are designed to support I&R/A Specialists taking the Certified Information Resource Specialist (CIRS) and the Certified Information Resource Specialist - Aging or CIRS-A exams.

2010 AIRS Exam Schedule

Exam date	Time	Location	Local Contact
April 16, 2010	10:00 AM to noon	Disability Resource Center of Milwaukee County 1220 W. Vliet Street, Room 104 Milwaukee, WI 53205	Steve Peterson Aging Resource Center of Milwaukee County Steven.Peterson@Milcnty.com
May 14, 2010	10:00 AM to noon	ADRC of Eau Claire County Eau Claire County Courthouse 721 Oxford Eau Claire, WI 54703	Ruth Rotramel ADRC of Grant County rrotramel@co.grant.wi.gov
May 14, 2010	10:00 AM to noon	Sawyer County Courthouse Assembly Room 10610 Main Street Hayward, WI 54843	Janell Keeter Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Janell.keeter@gwaar.org

2010 Study Group Schedule

Study Group Date	Time	Location	Local Contact
March 12, 2010	9:00 AM to noon	Disability Resource Center of Milwaukee County 1220 W. Vliet Street, Room 104 Milwaukee, WI 53205	Steve Peterson Aging Resource Center of Milwaukee County Steven.Peterson@Milcnty.com
April 9, 2010	9:00 AM to noon	ADRC of Eau Claire County Eau Claire County Courthouse 721 Oxford Eau Claire WI, 54703	Ruth Rotramel ADRC of Grant County rrotramel@co.grant.wi.gov
April 16, 2010	9:00 AM to noon	Sawyer County Courthouse Assembly Room 10610 Main Street Hayward, WI 54843	Janell Keeter Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Janell.keeter@gwaar.org



WEB SITES -- useful, helpful, resourceful, interesting ...

In no particular order and with no particular emphasis, here is a list of websites and helplines that may be useful to you as you perform your duties. These have been submitted by members of the WisconsinAIRS

Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance

www.alzwise.org/ -- This is the new name for the former South Central chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. As they say on their website, "The name has changed - but our services, support and commitment to you remain the same." The website has information on dementia for persons with memory loss and for family and friends. Also info on brain health; and services and resources.

Administration on Aging

www.aoa.gov/ -- the federal government's "new and improved" AoA website with links to info and services for elders and families, to AoA programs. Info on emergency preparedness, aging statistics, and much more.

Wisconsin AT4ALL

www.wisconsinat4all.com/welcome.aspx -- Wistech Device Loan and Demonstration program. Find assistive technology that is available for loan or demonstration throughout Wisconsin. It may be helpful to try out equipment prior to purchasing or obtaining funding help.

Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program ("TEPP")

<https://tepp.wipfli.com/> -- new website for online application. The TEPP program provides vouchers to Wisconsin residents who have disabilities and require specialized telecommunications equipment to access telephone services. The website has the application plus descriptions of voucher categories hard of hearing, severely hard of hearing or deaf, speech impaired, mobility impaired or motion impaired, severely hard of hearing or deaf AND low vision, severely hard of hearing or deaf AND blind).

Consumer World

www.consumerworld.org/ -- consumer resources on a non-commercial website. Info on prices, best buys, shopping, bargains, consumer resources, money, consumer agencies, companies, travel, and the internet. Includes consumer news, price checker, and a free weekly email newsletter.

The Cool Spot

www.thecoolspot.gov/ -- the young teen's place for info on alcohol and resisting peer pressure. A "cool spot" with games, quizzes, animations, and graphics to hold teens' interest. Includes reality checks, facts about alcohol, risk info, several links to help. Good for parents too.

National Legal Resource Center

www.nlrc.aoa.gov/ -- collaborative effort developed by the Administration on Aging. Includes best practices, technical assistance, resources, finding a legal services provider, case consultation, and training. Services are available to professionals and advocates in law and aging.

Medline Plus

<http://medlineplus.gov/> -- from the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health. Trusted, up-to-date info on conditions, diseases, wellness, drugs and supplements. Includes medical encyclopedia and dictionary, directories, and resources. Check out the interactive tutorials on many diseases, tests, and treatment procedures.

Military Mental Health

www.militarymentalhealth.org/Welcome.aspx -- an online screening tool to help service members and their families review their situation and need for mental health help. In addition to the screening tool, this site has videos, military referrals, and related articles for many mental health diagnoses.

Needy Meds -- find help with the cost of medicine www.needymeds.org/ -- information on medicine and healthcare assistance programs. Look up medicines to find if a patient assistance program exists that can provide free or low-cost medicine. Additional links to application assistance, disease-based assistance, government programs, and discount drug cards.

Social Security offices

<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp> -- enter a zipcode to find the local Social Security office; includes address, phone number, map, and link to other services in the area.

Wisconsin Well Woman Program

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/womenshealth/wwwp/> --

The Wisconsin Well Woman Program (WWWP) provides preventive health screening services to women with little or no health insurance coverage. Well Woman pays for mammograms, Pap tests, certain other health screenings, and multiple sclerosis testing for women with high risk signs of multiple sclerosis. The program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, and is available in all [72 Wisconsin Counties and 11 tribes](#). Covered services are available from participating health care providers at no cost to Well Woman clients. There is no premium, co-payment or deductible for the Well Woman Program. Not all covered services are available from every provider.

To be eligible: (1) must be a woman age 45 through 64, (2) income is within the [program's guideline limits](#), and (3) do not have health insurance, or the woman's insurance doesn't cover routine check-ups and screening, or the woman is unable to pay the deductible or co-payment.

Go to the website for more information and where to apply.

A few websites for fun!!

Crossword puzzles

www.crossword-puzzles.co.uk/ -- links to on-line crossword puzzles, make your own puzzles, books, dictionaries, gifts, and other word games.

Regret the Error

www.regrettheerror.com/ -- "Regret The Error reports on corrections, retractions, clarifications and trends regarding accuracy and honesty in the media." Interesting and entertaining!

Odd Wisconsin

www.wisconsinhistory.org/odd/ -- "Strange but true" from the Wisconsin Historical Society. The mission is to "amuse, surprise, perplex, astonish, and otherwise connect you with your past." Categories include animals, bizarre events, children, curiosities, odd lives, and strange deaths.

Create a snowflake

www.popularfront.com/snowdays/ -- by popular demand, "Air Waves" is repeating this website. Create your own snowflakes online and share. Over 9,000,000 snowflakes have been made so far. View snowflakes made by others. (Editorial note: amuse yourself on this website. Then *Think Spring!*)



A note from AIRS

(the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems):

AIRS is at about 865 renewed members, still a bit short from the goal of 1,200 as we had last year. Please renew your membership if you haven't already. Not sure??? ... please contact AIRS. If your agency is not renewing or merged with another agency or if you need another form, please contact AIRS membership director Moayad Zahralddin (moayad@airs.org). AIRS will edit their contact list or send another renewal form.

The number of members from Wisconsin typically has been among the highest in the country. Membership is "two for one" -- it includes membership in AIRS and WisconsinAIRS. Please renew if you have not. Reap benefits for your agency and keep Wisconsin on top!!

2-1-1 Wisconsin -- updates

Statewide implementation. 2-1-1 Wisconsin, Inc. has been very busy implementing the Business plan as all the Call Centers are currently in the process of the conversion of each of their Center's databases into the statewide data base system, ReferNet. There will be some fine-tuning needed to assure the data has been properly entered with the standardized taxonomy as approved by AIRS. The Operations Council is taking the lead in the effort to get all call centers' databases in. In addition, the Statewide Telephonic system is also being worked on in order to network all Call Centers throughout the State of Wisconsin. The phone system and data base are due to be in full operation by the end of the summer of 2010. The State of Wisconsin's allocation of Supplemental Social Services Block Grant funds have helped get the process of an integrated system wide technology infrastructure for the Data Base and Phone System going more quickly.

2-1-1 Act. There is a real need to draw attention to the recent developments in passing the 2-1-1 Act. It is very important to contact legislatures to support it to assure there is sufficient funds to maintain and operate a sustainable Statewide 2-1-1 system on an on-going basis. Access the AIRS web site to obtain the most current information on both S.2-1-1 and H.R 2-1-1.

H1N1 calls. The 2-1-1 Board of Directors would like to acknowledge all the hard work that was put forth by the



2-1-1 Call Centers throughout the State of Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin, Division of Public Health had directed that all public calls and questions on the H1N1 virus go to 2-1-1. Our Call Centers stepped up to the plate and undertook this massive challenge in stride. While seemingly overwhelmed at times, efforts in 2009 were a significant success in both response to caller but in the ability to report back data for public health analysis. Congratulations to all the 2-1-1 Call centers for their hard work.

2-1-1 Act:

Please do what you can to contact your Congressional legislators to encourage their support (and to thank them for their support!). A letter to legislators to support (or thank them for support) from United Way boards, 211s and others would be very welcome. Tell your legislator the difference 211 makes in your community and how much more of an impact it could make if programs received adequate funding.

United Way representatives from around the country will be meeting in Washington in March. Many will be advocating with members of Congress. If you are among them, WisconsinAIRS would love for you to share some highlights for our next newsletter. If you can do that, please forward your brief comments to *Air Waves* Editor, Ginger Ayres at <gayres@co.ozaukee.wi.us>

Join an informational listserv...

When your agency joined the Alliance of Information & Referral Services (AIRS) it automatically became a member of its state affiliate, WisconsinAIRS. There are two member listservs to which you, and other agency staff, are invited to subscribe so that you can receive information from members of both organizations and keep current in the field of I&A. The AIRS Networker, and the WisconsinAIRS listserv, are both Yahoo Groups.

WisconsinAIRS listserv. Jayne Mullins is the WisconsinAIRS listserv moderator. Membership is open to any WisconsinAIRS member or an individual who is working in the field of I&R/A. To subscribe to the WisconsinAIRS list simply email Jayne at Jayne.mullins@gwaar.org. She recommends you use your work email address and include your name, title, and location so she is able to track who belongs and from which agencies. We do send out conference datesavers,

notices on study groups for those who are interested in sitting for an AIRS certification exam, as well as testing locations and dates. Other datesavers for I&A trainings may also be posted and we sometimes forward updates from AIRS that our members may find of interest.

Member agencies should feel free to share datesavers of events they have planned that would draw regional or statewide attendance from among our members.

AIRS Networker. To register for the AIRS Networker listserv go to <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/airsnetworker/> and click on 'Join This Group'. The AIRS Networker has fairly regular activity so we suggest you either create a message rule so emails to that list are directed to a folder (example: 'AIRS_Networker') or choose the option in Yahoo Groups to receive emails bundled in a daily digest.

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