



PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

HIV ADVOCACY & SERVICES SINCE 1995

The Network
News
2013
December Issue #164

OREGON HIV / AIDS CASE MANAGEMENT



**2014 has arrived and with comes new health insurance for many!
There will continue to be questions and issues!
We continue to be here to help you navigate them.**

**Next Meeting
January**
**Afrocentric
Approaches to
Clinical Practice III**
**Danette C.
Haynes, LCSW
Clinical Director**
**Avel Gordly
Center for Healing**
**Oregon Health &
Science
University**

Medical Case Management Providers & Assisters

<http://www.ohsu.edu/partnership/> Partnership Project (Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Columbia Counties)

<http://www.hivalliance.org/> HIV Alliance and Case Managers (Benton, Clatsop, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Lincoln, Linn, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Lane, Marion and Polk Counties)

<http://www.eocil.org/> EOCIL and Case Managers(Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco and Wheeler Counties)

<http://web.multco.us/health/hiv-health-services-center> (Multnomah County HIV Clinic)

<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/care/!ut/p/c5/> (Kaiser IDC Clinic)

Assisters

<http://cascadaids.org/cover-oregon> (Assisters at Cascade AIDS Project)

State ADAP Program/Assisters

<http://www.oregon.gov/oha/pharmacy/CAREAssist/Pages/HealthCareReform.aspx>

Statement of Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, on New Payments to Same-Sex Married Couples

By Alan Edwards, Social Security Public Affairs

“I am pleased to announce that, effective December 16, 2013, Social Security is processing some widow’s and widower’s claims by surviving members of same-sex marriages and paying benefits where they are due. In addition, we are able to pay some one-time lump sum death benefit claims to surviving same-sex spouses. As I stated shortly after the Supreme Court decision on Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, our goal is to treat all Americans with dignity and respect.

We ask for continued patience from the public as we work closely with the Department of Justice to develop policies that are legally sound so we can process claims.

If you believe you may be eligible for Social Security, I encourage you to apply now to protect against the loss of any potential benefits. We will process claims as soon as additional instructions become finalized.”

To learn more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/same-sexcouples.

Get Benefit Verification Online

By Alan Edwards, Social Security Public Affairs



This time of year, a lot of people need proof of their income. People can use their cost-of-living adjustment notice or their SSA-1099 to verify their benefit income. But if they have lost their documentation and need proof of income, it’s easy to get a benefit verification letter at our website.

This letter is sometimes called a "budget letter," a "benefits letter," a "proof of income letter" or a "proof of award letter."

A benefit verification letter can be used to prove income or benefits if someone is applying for a loan or mortgage, needs housing assistance or other state or local benefits, or needs to prove retirement or disability status, Medicare health insurance coverage or age to a third party.

Someone can instantly obtain and print their benefit verification letter by taking a few minutes to create an online my Social Security at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH A COLA

By Alan Edwards, Social Security Public Affairs

Many people ring in the new year with Champagne. People who receive Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) get to ring it in with a COLA. This year, more than 60 million Americans are receiving a 1.5 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) in their monthly benefit payment.

The 1.5 percent COLA begins with increased benefits for more than 57 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2014, and payments to more than 8 million SSI recipients in late December 2013.

The estimated average monthly Social Security payment to a retired worker is \$1,294 (in 2014), up from \$1,275 (in 2013). The average monthly Social Security disability payment for an individual is \$1,148 (in 2014), up from \$1,131 (in 2013).

The basic monthly federal payment for SSI is \$721 (in 2014), up from \$710 (in 2013).

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$117,000, up from \$113,700. Of the estimated 165 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2014, about 10 million will pay higher taxes as a result of the increase in the taxable maximum.

The amount of earnings needed for one credit of Social Security coverage has gone up as well, but all workers can still earn up to four credits in a year. In 2014, a worker earns a credit after earning \$1,200. In 2013, one credit of coverage was \$1,160. It takes forty credits to be fully insured for retirement benefits.

Information about Medicare changes for 2014 is available at www.medicare.gov.

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice to learn more about the COLA and other Social Security changes in 2014.

From everyone at Social Security, have a Happy New Year.

Legacy Hospice



Gay Men Together in Grief

For Gay Men (GBTQ) Who Have Experienced Loss Through Death

This rich, safe and supportive gathering for gay men is a rare opportunity to come together in companionship with others like us, who also know the special relationship to grief that uniquely faces a gay man.

The group is offered free of charge.

Come to know the gifts of healing and even joy that
a new relationship to grief can bring in time.

The holidays are especially challenging even years later.

While grief is an alone process, you do not have to bear it alone anymore.

Your Guides: two peers who have learned to dance with their grief over the deaths of partners and loved ones in the AIDS epidemic. Both are clinical healthcare professionals in spiritual care at Legacy Health hospice and hospitals.

8 Weekly Meetings, Thursdays, 6:30-8:00 PM; Starting on January 9.

**For details or to reserve your place now in this space limited group...
CALL Legacy Hospice Bereavement Services at 503-220-1000**

Sponsored by Legacy Hospice <> In partnership with Friendly House
Friendly House, 1737 NW 26th Ave (at Thurman St), Portland, OR



Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year to all!!

I wanted to take some time to take note of how proud and impressed I am by the work that the community of HIV service providers has done together over the last several months. While we all know that the roll-out of Cover Oregon did not go as anyone planned, we do know that we in the HIV community, have worked together to understand what the next steps are for our clients, have shown extreme flexibility in changing our priorities at a minute's notice and have shared resources – including a special contact person who spent days on the phone with many of us which allowed us to be able to enroll clients in QHPs.

The staff of CAREAssist deserve special recognition for their time, they have spent endless hours working on the issues and providing the community assisters and medical case managers with the best information and tools they had to help clients transition successfully to their next insurance. CareAssist has also been proactive in brainstorming new programs that will assist clients to avoid gaps in coverage due to enrollment problems. Your hard work is greatly appreciated.

I have worked in this community for 13 years and it has been incredible to watch, and an honor to be a part of, this community coming together in such an unprecedented fashion to meet this unique need.

Due to our combined state-wide and cross-agency, efforts we have successfully assisted 100s of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS transition to health insurance that will allow them to continue to have access to the medical care and medications they need to live their healthiest lives.

I truly hope everyone was able to take some time over the last 2 holiday weeks to both rest from the work and to reflect on the incredible amount of work accomplished. Though it is not over, it is clear that we can accomplish much when we work in concert with each other and our clients. With all of the shifts that these insurance changes will bring, we will continue to be presented with opportunities to collaborate and find ways to best serve clients – we look forward to working together.

With deepest respect and appreciation,

Julia Lager-Mesulam, LCSW

Julia Lager-Mesulam, LCSW
Partnership Project Director
Editor of Network Notes

This newsletter is published by
[OHSU/ Partnership Project](#).

Our thanks Barbara Danel for website posting and Karen Smith for distribution of the newsletter.

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This issue, and issues from Feb 2002 on, can be found electronically [here](#)