



# NEW DIRECTIONS

*“By, for, and about consumers of behavioral health services”*

Volume 5, Issue 6

February & March 2009

## TAX TIME HELP

The following link, <http://www.irs.gov/efile/article/0,,id=118986,00.html> will take you to the IRS website for assistance on filing your federal taxes. There are options for software assistance or just the forms to fill out. They can assist you in choosing a company that is free or you can choose from a list that they have a link to, or just download the forms. These sites do not offer free assistance with state taxes. Below is some of what is on the website

The Free File program provides free federal income tax preparation and electronic filing for eligible taxpayers through a partnership between the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Free File Alliance LLC, a group of private sector tax software companies.

### How do you want to do your 2008 federal taxes?

#### - I want tax software with step-by-step help

- Free File supports preparation of Federal tax returns. However, many companies also offer state tax preparation though fees may apply.
- Free tax preparation and e-filing if your adjusted gross income is \$56,000 or less in 2008.
- Asks simple questions, puts your answers on the right forms.

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## SUPER SATURDAY SPECIAL

### Free Tax Preparation

*Grand Traverse & Leelanau County*

#### Featuring These Topics...

- **Surviving Life's Surprises...**  
*Managing Stress, Money & Your Health*
- **Don't Stress Me Out!**
- **Free Health Screenings**
- **Death & Taxes...**
- **Delay the First and File the Second**

**Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009**

**10:00 am to 3:30 pm check-in 9:00 am**

**TBAISD Career-Tech Center, 880 Parsons Rd**

Space is Limited call to reserve your spot 800.442.1713 or 231.947.8920

We will provide **Free Lunch & Free Daycare**

See brochure in the Traverse City Office

## Consumer Opportunities

**Recovery Council** (*see schedule on page 4*) please join us as we rotate to your office

**Learning Communities** (*page 4 for your local office meeting*) all welcome, please stop by

**MI-PATH** (*Personal Action Toward Health*) **NEW**

Registration needed contact:

Cadillac – Cathy Larson at (231) 876-3227

Grayling – Amy Taylor (989) 348-8522

Houghton Lake – Mary Beth Evans (989) 366-2950

Traverse City – Susan Bonnani (231) 935-3688 or Stacy

Frazier (231) 935-3958

**WRAP** (*Wellness Recovery Action Plan*) (*Peer service, your CMH worker or Customer Service can provide you with more information*)

**Pathways to Recovery** (*schedule on page 4*) Registration preferred but not needed

**Art Classes** (*see local schedule on page 4*) feel free to drop in and join the group

## Wexford County Literacy Program

The Cadillac Wexford Public Library is heading up a Literacy program for Wexford County. The group is currently meeting, getting organized and trained. They are ready to begin taking names of people who are interested in receiving tutoring to learn to read or to improve their reading skills. The actual tutoring may still be a month or so away. If you know anyone who is interested in receiving help with their reading, please have them contact Cathy at 775-6541. If you know of anyone who would like to be a volunteer tutor, they can also contact Cathy at the above phone number.

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- Covers the most commonly filed Federal tax forms and schedules.
- Includes Federal *e-file* - get your refund in as little as 10 days with Direct Deposit.
- Does all the math or you.
- Receive a quick confirmation within 48 hours that your return was received by the IRS.
- benefit from Free File's checks for accuracy.
- Available in Spanish.
- For more details, check the company's website.

### **- I want to fill in the tax forms and file them online without tax software.**

- Looks like blank IRS forms. You choose, self-prepare, and e-file your 1040, 1040 A and 1040EZ return.
- Covers the most commonly filed Federal tax forms and schedules.
- Includes basic calculation capability.
- Does NOT support state forms or State *e-file*.
- There are no income limitations.

## Drug Mixes a Risk in U. S.

*“At least 2 million Americans are taking a combination of drugs and supplements that can be a risky mix”*. Although the article was centered on older Americans, I have heard stories from consumers concerning unhealthy medication mixes. Some of the questions are: If I am on a certain med, should I be careful what ‘over the counter’ medication I use? Can aspirin affect certain meds? Can certain foods have an effect? Who to call for advice if I feel apprehensive? Are there certain common substances (*man-made or natural*) that should be avoided when taking certain meds? How about herbal remedies, ginkgo, etc.? Since physical health is directly related to mental health, if anyone knows where this info is easily accessible to consumers, let us know and we’ll pass it on.\*

### **Response from Certified Peer Support Specialists:**

Everyone (yes consumers!) should always inform their doctors on all the medications they are taking, prescribed by them or other doctors as well as vitamins, supplements and herbal remedies. One should make sure that their doctors are communicating with each other on your health, prescriptions and other needed information so that one can receive the best care for their body. This is referred to as coordination of care. A patient who advocates for themselves will ask their doctor to send information to their other providers and question whether they received important updates from their other providers as well.

By using a single pharmacy, your pharmacist will also check to make sure you are not getting medications that interact or counteract the others. The pharmacist can also let you know if an over the counter medication (cold treatments are a good example) is dangerous or which one you can take with your medications.

Advocate for yourself; be empowered to know what you are taking, why you are taking it and the risk/side effects that may occur to you. When you are prescribed a new medication read and ask questions of your provider about that medication, be aware of any warnings, (these will be on the prescription bottle as well) i.e., Do not take with alcohol, take after eating, may cause drowsiness...

Be assertive and take care of you - if this is difficult to do, find an advocate and have him/her attend appointments with you. No one knows your body like you. Be sure to share concerns with your provider. If you notice or feel things aren’t right after starting a medication, make note of this; if it persists or is a side effect that you have been informed to let you doctor know about them, follow through. The following are a few websites that can answer some of these questions:

[www.drugdigest.org](http://www.drugdigest.org) food and alcohol interactions

[www.drugstore.com/pharmacy/drugchecker/](http://www.drugstore.com/pharmacy/drugchecker/) medication to medication, herb...as well as other warnings

[www.medscape.com/druginfo/druginterchecker](http://www.medscape.com/druginfo/druginterchecker) medication interactions and individual medication warnings

*I personally have a medication that I need to make sure all of my providers are aware of due to the interaction issues; I also have to stay away from certain foods and most over the counter drugs. My pharmacist assists me any time I have the need for an over the counter type medication in what if any I can take. If I don’t pay attention it’s my health and quite possibly my life. We all need to know the most we can when we choose to take medications and/or supplements. ~ L.E.S. CPSS*

\*Article reprinted with permission from CHARGE, a Gerald Butler CPSS news item.

## New Medicare Part D plan

*transition medications available*

If you have a new plan every Medicare Part D drug plan is required to have a “**transition policy**” to make sure that new members can access the medications they have been taking regularly. New members can use the “transition policy” during the first 90 days with the plan to get **at least one 30-day** supply of a medication, even if the medication is not covered by the plan or is covered with a restriction (such as requiring “prior authorization”).

Ask the pharmacy to request that the pharmacist fill the prescription using the plan’s “transition fill policy.” The pharmacist will likely need to call the Part D plan to ask for the override code in order to bill it correctly.

Please keep in mind that a transition fill is only a temporary solution, and that you should take action immediately to ensure that you will continue to get your prescription covered throughout the rest of the year. To do this, you will need to have your doctor write a letter to the Part D plan explaining why this particular drug is medically necessary for you, and formally ask the plan for an “exception” to the formulary.

If you choose to stay in the same plan after the end of this year, you will need to have your doctor write another letter to the plan to continue to get the medication covered for next year.

## Northern Lakes Recovery Council

The Northern Lakes Recovery Council has assisted with the planning for the implementation of the REE (Recovery Enhancing Environment) survey. This survey was developed in part by Pricilla Ridgway who is one of the authors of Pathway to Recovery. Many Peer Support Specialists in Michigan and here at Northern Lakes CMH facilitate groups using this book.

Council members have also been reviewing the recovery grant activities and how they are introduced and used at Northern Lakes CMH. Some of the recovery grant initiatives are the upcoming recovery cookbook, (information in the recovery towers at your local CMH), recovery newsletter and continuing the recovery 101 items. These items are discussed at the Learning Communities and input is brought to the Recovery Council.

The council also received information concerning the pilot of: *5 Stages in the Recovery Process* training in Traverse City and implementation of the training.

They were also presented information on the MI-PATH program.

For more information on the Recovery Council contact Mary Beth Evans at NLCMH.

## MI-PATH: A new, free recovery class!

*(Personal Action Toward Health)*

Health. It is definitely a buzz word in the media in recent times. Concern for one’s health, whether it be getting healthier after a diagnosis of high blood pressure, heart conditions, diabetes or to lose weight, stop smoking, eat healthier or exercising, everyone seems to be thinking about it more and more. Looking at a new career? Health.

We’re continually told about the need for medical professionals with the increase of retirees, a.k.a., the baby boomers, reaching retirement age and treatment they will be seeking. People want to live longer and that means healthier.

Northern Michigan’s Diabetes Outreach Network has trained nine Northern Lakes Providers in PATH. Classes will be offered at all four of our offices. They will run for six weeks and each are taught by two trainers who may have a chronic health condition and are working for a healthier life. PATH has been proven to reduce symptoms and physician visits, and to increase self-management and communication with physicians.

**WHAT is PATH?** PATH is designed to provide skills and tool needed by people living with chronic health conditions to improve their health and manage their symptoms. As a result, people are better equipped to face the daily challenges of living with a chronic condition.

**What’s in it for you?** Learn how to:

- Deal with challenges of not feeling well
- Talk to healthcare workers and family members
- Overcome stress and relax
- Increase your energy
- Handle everyday activities more easily
- Stay Independent

Check the website [www.MIpath.org](http://www.MIpath.org)

The following is taken from the website:

### **Help Yourself to Healthy Living!**

The Michigan Partners on The Path invite you to browse our website and find classes and information that will help you to manage your chronic illnesses more effectively, as well as reducing your risk of developing other chronic conditions.

Reducing your risk of developing chronic diseases, and being able to manage those chronic illnesses that have developed play key roles in:

Helping you stay independent as you age

Experience a high quality of life

Eating a healthier diet

Getting moderate physical activity

Reducing your stress and setting reasonable, achievable goals.

These things will all contribute to your overall wellness at any age.

## Mental Health Advisory Board Seeks Members

Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS) is looking for people from around the state to serve on its Advisory Council for services to people with mental illness. Since 1995, the Advisory Council has advised the agency about activities and issues which affect the lives of people with mental illness. At least 60% of Advisory Council members are people who have used mental health services. Parents with minor children with emotional impairments are also welcomed. Other members include mental health providers, attorneys and relatives of people with mental illness. All applicants must have a commitment to promoting the legal rights and personal choices of people labeled mentally ill. Advisory Council members serve a term of four years and currently meet approximately six times per year. Appointments to the Advisory Council are made by the President of the MPAS Board of Directors. Travel and child care expenses may be reimbursed. For more information or an application, please contact MPAS at 1-800-288-5923.

## SAVE THE DATE

United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan and Michigan Disability Coalition, invites you to attend a Regional Public Forum for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

**MAY 20, 2009, 10:30-3:00PM**

**Treetops Resort, Gaylord, MI**

Purpose of the Forum

To get Public input for **Michigan DD Council's** next state plan;

To explore key issues affecting the lives of people with developmental disabilities;

To identify critical challenges affecting their lives;

To identify solutions that have been effective in your area.

*For more information contact Joanne Rackow at 800 834-3393.*

### Electronic Distribution!

Receive *New Directions* through the email. If you would like to receive *New Directions* electronically please submit your email address to [Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org](mailto:Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org) writing "New Directions" in the subject line. Your address will be used solely for distribution of *New Directions*. It will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

### Contributions!

If you would like to contribute to *New Directions* please contact The Editor, Leslie Sladek, at 231 933-4907, or email [Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org](mailto:Leslie.Sladek@nlcmh.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Feb. 3 - Recipient Rights Advisory Committee** 2:30-5:00 pm in Traverse City with Video conferencing available to Cadillac or Houghton Lake upon request.
- **Feb. 11 - CAC (Consumer Advocacy Council)** 1:30 pm meets in Traverse City with Video to Houghton Lake
- **Feb. 19 - NLCMH Board** meeting in Grayling at 6:00 p.m.
- **Mar. 11- CAC (Consumer Advocacy Council)** 1:30 pm meets in Traverse City with Video to Houghton Lake
- - **NLCMH Board** meeting in from 6:00pm

## LEARNING COMMUNITIES

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday** – Feb. 10 & Mar. from 12:30-2:30 pm in Houghton Lake

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday** – Feb. 11 & Mar. 11 from 1-3:00 pm in Grayling

**2<sup>nd</sup> Friday** – Feb.13 & Mar. 13 from 10-12:00 noon in Cadillac

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday** – Feb 17 & Mar 17 from 1-3:00 pm in Traverse City

## NLCMH Recovery Council

Feb. 27 - 1-3:00 pm in Houghton Lake

Mar 27 - 1-3:00 pm in Grayling

## Art Classes

Cadillac – Tues. Feb. 10, Mar. 3 & 17, 2:30-4:30

Grayling – Thurs. Feb 5, Mar. 11 & 25, 10-noon

Houghton Lake – Thurs. Feb 5, Mar. 11 & 25, 2-4pm

Traverse City – Mon. Feb. 9, Mar. 2 & 16, 10-2pm

## Pathway to Recovery

Cadillac - Tuesdays 10-noon for information call Nan 876-3252

Grayling - Wednesdays 10-noon for information call Shannon 348-0001

Houghton Lake - Fridays 1-3pm for information call Martha 366-8550

Traverse City - Tuesdays 1-3pm for information call Leonard 935-3688

CHECK IT OUT

## Parenting Communities

A wealth of information for young parents, as well as free activities and learning opportunities available in various locations in Leelanau County. Parenting Communities of Leelanau County newsletter available online at

<http://www.leelanauchildrencenter.org/communities>

*This Newsletter is produced with support from NLCMH.*