



The Advocate

The Newsletter for the MSW Student Organization

January/February 2001

Rhode Island College School of Social Work www.ric.edu/mswso

Welcome to Spring Semester!

Gleanings from povertynews

povertynews is a email news service of The Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College School of Social Work (www.povertyinstitute.org), a daily or semi-daily posting of late breaking news, reports, and actions in social welfare, advocacy, and human service areas. (To subscribe, send an email to joinnews@povertyinstitute.org, and write **subscribe** in the message field.) Below are some recent news examples:

GAO Study: Disabled Could Lose Benefits February 9, 2001

Disabled workers and their families would see their benefits cut under reform proposals that would allow Americans to divert some Social Security taxes into individual investment accounts, according to congressional investigators. "This reduction in benefits under reform to levels below that of current law" would occur even in the best of circumstances for disability beneficiaries, said the study by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress.

President Bush in his campaign proposed giving workers the option of staying entirely in the Social Security system or investing a portion of their Social Security taxes in individual retirement accounts. Those who invest would take a smaller payout from the program when they retire but would supplement their benefits with the private investments.

About 7.4 million disabled workers and their families accounted for about 17 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries in 1999, the report said. The report is a "wake-up call" to policymakers engaged in the reform debate, said Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, who requested the study.

The GAO report and press release are available at the following addresses: <http://www.gao.gov/daybook/010207.htm>

New Patient Bill of Rights Introduced February 9, 2001

Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001 on February 6, 2001. Supported by a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers, the bill is a strong patients' bill of rights and would allow individuals to sue their HMOs. The McCain-Kennedy bill is very similar to the Norwood-Dingell bill that passed the House in 1999, and it is supported by Families USA. It would cover all 160 million privately insured Americans and would guarantee access to emergency and specialty care. The bill also requires health plans to tell consumers how to pay for out-of-network emergency room visits, how to access specialists, and how to handle appeals. Visit the FamiliesUSA for up to date information <http://www.familiesusa.org>

TANF Supplemental Grants Should be Extended For Fiscal Year 2002 February 8, 2001

2/8/2001- Report by Wendell Primus and Ed Lazere, Center for Budget & Policy Priorities: The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant established in the 1996 welfare law included modest supplemental grants for 17 relatively poor or rapidly growing states. The grants were intended to reduce the very large disparity between poorer and wealthier states in TANF funding per poor child that otherwise would result

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□ MSWSO Officers □

Dianne Corbin, *President* Mary De Ruosi *Vice President* Pauline Carlson *co-Treasurer* Deborah Forcelli *co-Treasurer*
Michael Pay *co-Secretary* Greta Collins Brown *co-Secretary* Randy Oftedahl *Newsletter editor* Nancy Gewirtz, *Faculty Advisor*



Students Participate in Hiring Process

During the month of January, several MSW students participated in the hiring process for the new director of field education at Rhode Island College. First and second-year students interviewed five candidates using a list of questions developed by MSW Student Organization members at their December 7, 2000 meeting. These students also offered their feedback to Dean Metrey and the hiring committee about the candidates. Additionally, Christine O'Malley served as the student representative on this committee.

A special thank-you to Christine O'Malley, Judy Gorman, Dianne Corbin, Mary DeRuosi, Louise MacLellan, and Jennifer Klyberg who attended the interviews and participated in this important process.

The new director of field education, **Mr. Jim Ryczek**, introduced himself at a recent MSWSO meeting and assured members that he would support all students in securing appropriate field placements next year. MSWSO members discussed forming a Student Advisory Board to help facilitate ongoing communication between students and Mr. Ryczek regarding concerns about field placements.

Stay tuned field education news and updates.



**But (NOT) seriously, folks...
Check out the new
MSWSO Jokes page at
www.ric.edu/mswso/jokes.htm**



New Social Work Resources Page

Recently, a Social Work Resources page was added to the MSW Student Organization website. The page can be accessed by entering the site (www.ric.edu/mswso) and then clicking on the link on the bar running across the top of the home page entitled "Resources."

On this page students will find a variety of links to non-profit sites, government organizations, and advocacy committees focused on physical and mental health, children, women, minorities, and substance abuse. New links will be added on an ongoing basis. If you have a link that you believe would complement this page, please contact Dianne Corbin via e-mail (dpcorbin@mediaone.net) or student mail.

MSW Student Alumni Group

At the last MSW Student Organization meeting, second year student Jonathan Sigman introduced the idea of forming a student alumni group, composed of MSW graduates who are concerned about issues of social concern, who would like to form a peer consultation group, study together for licensing exams, or just keep in touch.

Complete the flier in your mailbox (appropriately entitled "Yipee!!!") and return to Jonathan's mailbox as soon as possible. Results will be reviewed at the next MSWSO meeting on February 22, 2001 and shared with the student body.



Remember...

- ◇ Remember that your presence is a present to the world.
- ◇ Remember that you are a unique and unrepeatable creation.
- ◇ Remember that your life can be what you want it to be.
- ◇ Remember to take the days just one at a time.
- ◇ Remember to count your blessings, not your troubles.
- ◇ Remember that you'll make it through whatever comes along.
- ◇ Remember that most of the answers you need are within you.
- ◇ Remember those dreams waiting to be realized.
- ◇ Remember that decisions are too important to leave to chance.
- ◇ Remember to always reach for the best that is within you.
- ◇ Remember that nothing wastes more energy than worry.
- ◇ Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
- ◇ Remember that the longer you carry a grudge, the heavier it gets.
- ◇ Remember not to take things too seriously.
- ◇ Remember to laugh.
- ◇ Remember that a little love goes a long way.
- ◇ Remember that a lot of love goes forever.
- ◇ Remember that happiness is more often found in giving than getting.
- ◇ Remember that life's treasures are people, not things.
- ◇ Remember that miracles can still happen
- ◇ As I live each day may I do my part to make one difference...
- ◇ To touch one heart...
- ◇ And through each day may it be my goal...
- ◇ to encourage one mind and inspire one soul.....

-Submitted by Mary De Ruosi

-GLEANINGS Continued – from the basic TANF funding formula and to afford the poorer states a more adequate opportunity to achieve TANF goals. Supplemental TANF grants have become an integral part of welfare reform efforts.

The supplemental grants included in the 1996 law were authorized only through fiscal year 2001, while the law generally was authorized through fiscal year 2002. This means that under current law, the 17 states will face a reduction in their TANF funding of as much as 10 percent of their block grant starting on October 1 of this year, while the other, wealthier, states will experience no reduction.. The authors explain why and how funding the supplemental grants can be achieved in TANF reauthorization. Full report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/2-6-01wel.htm>

Bush Proposes to Eliminate Estate Tax February 8, 2001 --- According to the National Women's Law Center, President Bush's proposal to eliminate the estate tax would benefit only the top 5 percent of tax filers and do nothing for the overwhelming majority of women and their families who do not stand to gain from inherited wealth. Moreover, the size of the proposed tax cut would deplete funds for programs that women and their families depend on.

"To bill this aspect of the plan as 'helping families' is somewhat misleading. Women and their families are disproportionately in the middle and lower income brackets that won't be helped at all by this change," said Nancy Duff Campbell, NWLC co-president. "Over one-quarter of the money in the proposed tax cut comes from the elimination of the estate tax, but all of the benefit would go to a small handful of wealthy Americans." "It's not the estate tax that is keeping the vast majority of American families from preserving their assets. It's the staggering costs of health care, including long term care and the other costs associated with catastrophic illnesses, especially as people age, that is depleting family assets -- and these are the types of issues we should be addressing instead of a tax cut," said Campbell.

NYC Infant Deaths Rise After Budget Cuts Feb 6, 2001 -Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report- The New York City neighborhoods of Harlem and Fort Greene saw rising infant mortality rates in 1999, prompting politicians to call for the restoration of federal funding for the Healthy Start program, credited with previous death rate reductions, the New York Times reports. According to statistics recently released by the city's Department of Health, the city's overall mortality rate of infants under the age of one increased from 6.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 1998 to 6.9 in 1999, a 1.5% rise and the first increase since 1988. The

Cartoon Commentary



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-**GLEANINGS continued** - increase was most pronounced in the Manhattan neighborhood of central Harlem, which saw a rise from 11.4 deaths per 1,000 births in 1998 to 15.8 in 1999, and the Brooklyn neighborhood of Fort Greene, which had a 10.8 rate in 1999, up from 8.8 in 1998, increases of 39% and 23%, respectively.

This full report is available from the Kaiser Family Foundation at: http://www.kaisernet.org/daily_reports/rep_hpolicy.cfm#2665

The State of Older Women in America Jan 31, 2001

- The typical woman over 65 lives alone, usually having outlived her husband. She makes do on an income of about \$15,000 a year, compared with an average of about \$27,000 for elderly men.

She spends about a fifth of her income on medical costs - largely prescription drugs which are not covered under Medicare. She will live six years longer than the average man and is likely to need long-term care: two-thirds of nursing home patients are women. Because women typically outlive men and are thus more likely to develop chronic illnesses, women on Medicare spend 20% more on prescription drugs than their male counterparts. This stark statistical picture of female aging was presented yesterday in "The State of Older Women in America," a report by the Older Women's League, a national advocacy group. For more info, go to <http://www.owl-national.org/>

Advocacy: Oh Yes You Can...and Should

The latest issue of *The Nonprofit Quarterly* focuses on advocacy. Articles include David Arons on "**The Meaning and Actions of Advocacy**", Karen Paget on "**The Big Chill**", and "**Separate, We Lose,**" by Pablo Eisenberg, who concludes that despite dramatic growth, frenetic activity and increasing diversity, the nonprofit sector's influence over meaningful public policy is actually weaker than ever before. Eisenberg says our fragmented approach to public policy is the major source of weakness with the nonprofit sector.

Several of the articles are available online at: <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/advocacy/index.htm>.

NEXT MEETING OF THE MSWSO

Thurs. Feb. 22 7 pm
School of Social Work
Everyone is ENCOURAGED to attend! Agenda items include:

- ⇒ **Traveler's Aid Directories**
- ⇒ **Talent show update**
- ⇒ **Graduation 2001: social action theme and reception**
- ⇒ **MSW Alumni Group: response from students**
- ⇒ **Plan for election of new officers (school year 2001-2)**



*It's your MSWSO...
Get
Involved!!*

Your ideas, feedback, and comments are always WELCOME!!

Send us your comments on **The Advocate**, MSWSO, or life as an MSW Student. Contact an MSWSO officer, or send e-mail to our Newsletter Coordinator at randy@oftedahl.com and/or put a note in the MSWSO mailbox (located in the School of Social Work building, 2nd floor, across from faculty mailboxes)