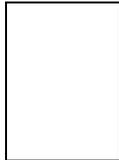




FACILITATED ENROLLMENT MARCH 2009

“Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night. ~Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke*”

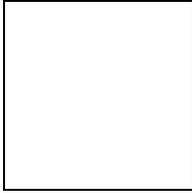


It is now March – the downhill slide to the end of March. What on Earth happened to February??? One of my DSS pals asked me how I found the time to write a newsletter. Clearly, I didn't find the time in February. One missed month was too many! Last newsletter, I discussed my resolutions for 2009. One was to become less moody by trying to manage my sleeplessness. And the other was to try to do better with patience. I have done better with the sleeplessness. Going to the gym at 6 am will make you tired by the end of the day (and gives you great muscle tone). Going to the gym at 6 am will also make you tired by 9 am!!!! (My daughter, the unemployed drama queen, says I am happier since I started going to the gym).

The patience issue is a slightly harder challenge. In order to help with that resolution, I gave up stress for Lent! Pick yourselves up off the floor – it's not **that** funny. I've actually tried to deal with the day one hour at a time. Here is my thought pattern – if I can give up stress for 6 weeks, I can give it up forever. I have established a pattern for myself; a technique if you will, to get through the day. And that will help with the patience seeking. The bottom line is this – if I can be stress free throughout the day, I can be stress free the majority of the time. I have a wedding this year – if you think work is stressful, try planning a wedding in today's economy!!!! Being stress free will certainly help in the patience department.

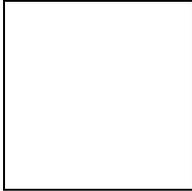
Don't get me wrong – I am not all sunshine and light now. I have my moments, just like everyone else does. I get through them by taking deep breaths, as corny as that sounds. I walk away from my desk. I let the phone go to voice mail. I **smile** when I answer the phone (okay, 85% of the time I smile). At home, I put Daphne's coat on and I take my poor old dog out in the yard. She instills peace in me simply because she is grateful to have time with me (and we are grateful she is still with us). I walk on the treadmill so it doesn't become the world's most expensive towel rack. These tricks may seem like no-brainers, but until I put them into practice, I didn't think they would work either.

Next month, we'll discuss the stress reducing technique of watching a husband install a 90 gallon fish tank and making Christmas cards in March.....hmmmm.



Desk Aids

Beginning on March 27, 2009, we will be using one desk aid again – yay!!!! It has been most confusing (especially at deadline) to deal with multiple desk aids. Some of the plans were confused, some enrollers were confused, but we are all on the same page now.

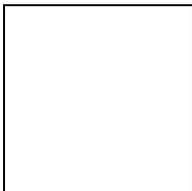


Volume of applications

You weren't losing your mind if you thought you were busier in January than February. The number of applications submitted for processing in January totaled 128. The number of people on those applications (children, pregnant women and adults) totaled 221.

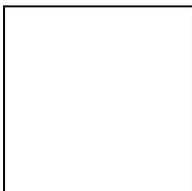
In February, there were 198 applications submitted for processing with a total of 392 people on them. For those of you who are counting, that's 60 more applications and 171 more people. I do not know what March has in store for us. I know we have been busy.

To the Local Districts – we are trying to send applications 3 times per week. We do not want to overload your caseworkers. The majority of our applications appear to be going to the Local Districts. We realize how overloaded you are.



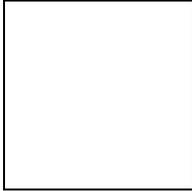
Errors

We are not immune to mistakes. We seem to run in cycles. I vow that we are trying our very hardest to send out error free applications. We realize that errors delay the process. Sometimes, we just plain goof up☺ We will do better. The section in which we see the biggest mistake is Section C, Question 6. If a family checks yes, you must answer the rest of the question. We cannot answer it for you. Inevitably, we have to call the family and obtain the information. Please answer this question at the time of application. It will save us all in the long run.



Application Sequence

Here's a small heads up – okay, a big shout out – about the order of documents. Please pay attention to the order sequence of the documents. I am hearing a lot of sighs coming from QA about this problem. Please refer to your training manuals for the proper sequence. I am including a copy of the sequence with the newsletter. Put it in front of you, hang it on the bulletin board, but make sure it is visible. If someone other than you is making copies, remember this – your name is on the application, making it **your** responsibility that the order is correct.

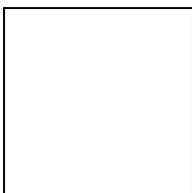


Quality Assurance

MISN has added a part time quality assurance reviewer. Jennifer Howard will be reviewing the applications as well as Vivian (and in times of panic, I will also review). Jennifer will be contacting you if there are questions on your applications. If you have noticed, we are not returning applications to you. We are trying to cut down on return time by contacting you directly. Please respond in a timely manner if you receive a voice mail, phone call or an email from Vivian, Jennifer or I, in regards to an application. There have been some concerns when we ask for clarification. A health plan will contact MISN if they have a problem with the application. The local districts contact the family. While this cuts down on the delay in processing, it doesn't let us know what error we have made. Our goal is error free applications. If we ask you for something, please provide it. You may certainly state your case if you are in disagreement. We will always contact the State for clarification.

The biggest area of debate is Section C, question 3 – “Does anyone applying already have health insurance?” We have stated we would like everyone who has insurance listed in this space – whether they are applying or not. We feel this section helps tell the family's story. Many of you feel we are asking too much. Look at it this way - it forces you to look at a pay stub to see if there are medical deductions. It forces a dialogue if there are deductions for insurance. It's a back up to the deductions. It's why we ask for it – we want a complete story.

Please stamp and initial copies of birth certificates, social security cards, driver's licenses, permanent resident cards. You have been provided with stamps for this purpose.



Parting Notes

I do not know why we started with a picture of Dr. Seuss, so don't ask about the significance! It just made me smile! Some dates to remember:

March 27:	Use new desk aid only
April 15:	Income tax day – 2008 taxes must be used for self-employment income
April 22-April 24:	Lynda on vacation (yee –ha, I'm headed to Texas)

Attached to the newsletter is the Application Sequence, an article on ways to stop dwelling on issues and a giggle about numbers to perhaps inspire you.

I'll keep you posted on the patience thing....I am a work in progress.