

Medicare Part D Open Enrollment

The open enrollment period for the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan is from November 15th to December 31st, 2009. This is the time when you can enroll in Medicare Part D or switch from one plan to another. If you have low income you may qualify for a Low Income Subsidy, which would assist with premiums and co-pays. To find out more about the Low Income Subsidy or Medicare Part D open enrollment, you can contact any of the following organizations for help.

If you have a disability and are under 60:

- Disability Benefit Specialist at your county's Aging and Disability Resource Center, or
Disability Drug Benefit Helpline- 1-800-926-4862

- If you are 60 or older:

Contact the County Elderly Benefit Specialist at your county's Aging and Disability Resource Center, or
The Prescription Drug Hotline- 1-866-456-8211

- North Country Independent Living's Benefit Specialist.

Changes in Energy Assistance Program

There have been eligibility changes in the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). This program provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations for low income individuals and families in Wisconsin. Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. Whether you use wood, propane, natural gas, electricity, or fuel oil to heat your home, energy assistance is available if you qualify. The changes are to the income eligibility guidelines. A person can now have significantly more income than last year and still qualify for WHEAP. For example, a family of one can now have monthly income of \$1,953.00, a family of two can have up to \$2,554.00. So if you didn't qualify last year you should check again this year. For more information or to apply, contact your local county human services department.

2010 Calendars Available

The popular North Country Calendars are now available at both the Superior and Ashland office locations! Sorry, we don't have the capacity to mail or ship these very popular and handy year-at-a-glance calendars, so you need to stop by and pick them up.

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Receive North Country News via Email
If you would like to receive North Country News via email please contact North Country at ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org or call 800-924-1220v/tty

North Country is looking for few good board members!

Did you know North Country's charter calls for our board of directors and staff to be comprised of at least 51% people with disabilities? It is part of our way to ensure consumer control of the organization. We strongly believe that the lessons we learn from our disability experience provides valuable information to other consumers. Our nine-member board will have a position available in January 2010 as one of our board members is approaching the end of her 2nd term. Currently our board is comprised of 67% consumers, so our new members could be a family member, interested professional, community member, or a consumer.

We also like to have geographic representation and currently have no board members from Bayfield or Burnett counties. We also value diversity in other ways as well. We have parents, Native Americans, Veterans, interpreters, county board members, bankers, etc. Some of the disabilities represented are Physical Disabilities, Blindness, Diabetes, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, Stroke Survivors, etc.

Board members set policy for the organization and attend quarterly board meetings in Ashland or Superior. There are also committee meetings, training opportunities, etc. Our board serves as volunteers to the organization but we do reimburse for expenses so it should not cost you anything. Please consider serving. It's a lot for work but also fun and has lots of opportunities. For more information, you can contact me, John Nousaine, 715-392-9118, 800-924-1220, nciljohn@superior-nfp.org

Youth Wanted - Come Learn, Play, and Have Fun

North Country is in the process of putting together a Youth Group in Superior on Mondays after school. We are looking for students in 9th to 12th grade, with any disability. Students will be working with UW-Superior students and NCIL staff on what to expect after high school, learn about reasonable accommodations, IL Philosophy, Self Advocacy and much more. Contact Gloria at our Superior office.

Did you know.....?

November is:

American Diabetes Month, Military Family Appreciation Month, Good Nutrition Month, National Home Care & Hospice Month, National Epilepsy Month, National Alzheimer's Disease Month, National AIDS Awareness Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, National Family Caregiver's Month and National Long Term Care Awareness Month

December is:

National Stress Free Family Holiday Month, Universal Human Rights Month, Seasonal Depression Awareness Month and Colorectal Cancer Education and Awareness Month

January is:

Cervical Cancer Screening Month, International Quality of Life Month, National Volunteer Blood Donor Month, Self-help Group Awareness Month and Bath Safety Month

TELEWORK The Wisconsin Telework Program is a statewide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from home or from other remote sites away from the office, such as work on the road or at a Telework center.

Telework is made possible through a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Department of Workforce Development and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation received the grant and provide program and fiscal oversight.

North Country Independent Living staff are able to answer questions you may have. Call 800-924-1220 v/tty.

HINI Prevention Tips

1. Frequent hand- washing.
2. “Hands-off-the-face” approach. Resist all temptations to touch any part of your face.
3. Gargle twice a day with warm salt water or Listerine. Do not underestimate this simple, inexpensive and powerful preventative method.
4. Blowing your nose hard once a day and swabbing both nostrils with cotton buds dipped in warm salt water is very effective in bringing down viral population.
5. Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C.
6. Drink as much as you can of warm liquids (tea, coffee, etc).



Calendar of Events

All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.

First Monday of the month, NorthernBridges Board of Directors meeting, Ramada Inn, Hayward, 10290 Highway 27 South and County Road B, 9-3 p.m. Open to the public. NorthernBridges board is responsible for implementing the expansion of Family Care in northern Wisconsin.

National Homeless Awareness Week, November 16-20th.

Day of Discovery Curling, December 4th, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Duluth Curling Club. Registration deadline is November 27th. This clinic is designed to introduce wheelchair athletes to the excitement and challenge of this Paralympics sport. Cost is \$10.00. For more information, call Courage Center Duluth, 218-726-4762.

North Country Board of Directors meeting, January 8 in Ashland. For more information, contact John Nousaine in our Superior office.

Early Registration Alpine Skiing

Tuesday or Thursday, January 12 through March 18, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Spirit Mountain Rental area. Cost \$125.00. Registration deadline: Jan 5th. For more information, contact Courage Center Duluth, 218-726-4762.

Independent Living Legislative Days in Madison, February 9 & 10, 2010. For more information, call John Nousaine in our Superior office.

Seventh Annual Transition Conference, February 18 & 19, 2010 at the Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Applications for transition conference scholarships are now being accepted. Applications: http://www.wsti.org/scholarship_app_form.php

A limited number of scholarships will be available for parents and youth to attend this conference. Youth who attend must have a disability and be between the ages of 14 and 21. Youth under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult attending the conference. **Deadline for applications is December 1, 2009.**

DARING, Disability Advocacy, Resource and INclusion Group, meets in Superior every second Friday at 12:30 p.m. at the Superior Public Library. For more information, contact Martha at North Country or join online at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/daring_to_make_a_stand/

Time Traders North has activities in communities around the northland. For more information or to join the time bank, visit:

www.timetradersnorth.org or call Martha at 715-372-6304.

The ARC of the Northwoods, an advocacy group made up of people with disabilities, has monthly meetings in Ashland or Hurley. For more information, call New Horizons North at 682-7171 and speak with either Linda or Dea.

ADA Amendments Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides legal protections for Americans with disabilities. However, since the passage of the law nearly 20 years ago, a series of court decisions has made it increasingly difficult for persons with disabilities to qualify for the law's protections.

To remedy this problem, Congress recently passed important changes to the ADA. Congress broadened the scope of who is protected and the type of disabilities that qualify. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) went into effect on January 1, 2009.

While the ADAAA does not change the actual definition of disability, it does clarify the meaning of terms used in the definition of disability, including:

- What it means for a disability to "substantially limit" a major life activity

- What is included as a major life activity

- What it means to be "regarded as" having a disability

The ADAAA represents an important step by Congress to return to the original spirit and intent of the ADA to protect people with disabilities from discrimination. Before Congress took action, court rulings had severely limited the definition of disability in such a way that few people qualified for protection under the Act.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently proposed new ADAAA regulations on September 23, 2009, including issuing a new definition for "substantially limits." If you would like to view the amendments and comment, go to www.eeoc.gov and look under "Notices". The public comment period closes on Nov. 23rd.

Adapted from an article on FindLaw

Transportation Voucher Program Gets People on the Road

This year North Country's transportation voucher program is helping even more people get to more places.

During the first nine months of the program, 79 participants have made nearly 4,000 trips, traveling more than 110,000 miles. Some riders are traveling more than 40 miles each way to buy groceries and 100 miles or more to medical appointments.

Program participants have made more than 1,200 trips to medical appointments, 1,100 trips for shopping, 700 for social and recreational purposes and 700 for work and school.

Voucher program riders have also worked to learn about additional transportation resources in their communities such as volunteer driver programs, other human services transportation programs, and a growing number of public transit opportunities.

North Country has applied for funding for 2010. If you or a family member or friend would be interested in getting more information about our voucher program, you may contact Bob Olsgard, Transportation Coordinator at: ncilbob@superior-nfp.org or toll free at 800-924-1220, extension 20.

Many thanks to all our participants and drivers. The North Country Transportation Voucher Program is supported with funding provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's New Freedom Initiative.

Personal Care Program Update

The Personal Care Program at North Country Independent Living just wrapped up its first year successfully. We have had a tremendous amount of positive feedback from our consumers about the cares that they are receiving in their homes. We currently are providing services to consumers in Douglas, Sawyer, Price, Ashland, and Bayfield counties. Throughout the next year we are hoping to be providing services in all eight of our service counties, with workers in all eight of our counties as well. Our Personal Care Workers enjoy caring for people in their homes and look forward to building positive friendships with their consumers. Currently we have over 50 active Personal Care Workers and are always looking to expand. Personal care is defined as 'hands on cares', such as bathing assistance, transfers, and range of motion exercises. And supportive home care is light housekeeping, errand running, companionship, and laundry for example. If you or someone you know is interested in receiving personal cares or supportive home care services please contact Amy at our Superior office for details.

Personal Care Workers wanted for working with people in their home. Please stop in at the Superior office and pick up an application or call Amy if you have any questions.

North Country is looking for a Few Good Drivers

If you have a safe, reliable vehicle and a little time, you could help our friends and neighbors who need transportation by signing up to drive for North Country's volunteer driver program. Signing up is easy—just call transportation coordinator Bob Olsgard in our Superior office or email: ncilbob@superior-nfp.org. Drivers select the hours and days they will be available to drive.



Support Groups

All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.

Ashland Area Brain Injury/Stroke Support Group, meets the third Wednesday of the month at the Chequamegon Clinic, 415 Ellis Ave. For information, call Stewart at North Country in Ashland.

Superior MS Support Group, meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at the Superior Public Library. For more information, contact Pam at 394-6958.

Visually Impaired Support

Group, Park Falls Area/Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Meets at 700 Division Street in Park Falls the third Wednesday of the month. For more information, Contact Arnold at 762-4018.

Ashland area Low Vision Support Group, meets the second Wednesday of the month at the Ashland Senior Center. Call the Senior Center for more information, 682-4414.

Disability Navigator Project

This employment resource project is available for anyone with a disability who is interested in working and would like to find out more about disability and employment resources and services. Information and referral is also available about reasonable accommodations, benefits, assistive technology and employment rights under the ADA.

John Nedden-Durst will be making outreach visits to each of the Job Centers in our region. Please email or call John in the Ashland office for more information or if you would like to schedule an appointment.

Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP)

If you are one of nearly 36 million American adults with some degree of hearing loss, you may be having difficulty using a regular telephone. The Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) is available to help people with disabilities purchase equipment they need to use basic telephone services. The TEPP is funded by the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund (USF) established by the Public Service Commission.

There are many agencies and/or organizations that distribute TEPP information and can answer questions about TEPP. Some agencies or organizations will assist individuals to complete the application or select equipment. Demonstration, trial, and loan equipment may be available as well as assistance in determining what type of equipment works best for your situation. There may be organizations/businesses using TEPP as a “marketing tool” by offering a “free telephone.” These organizations may not be providing complete information about the TEPP program and what it covers. It is important for you to receive the best guidance possible to ensure you have equipment that is right for you.

Complete information about the TEPP is available online through the Public Service Commission at <http://psc.wi.gov/consumerinfo/assistancePgms/tepp/tepp-ind.htm>. You can get information about TEPP and/or request assistance from (list not all-inclusive): Independent Living Centers, Aging & Disability Resources Centers (ADRCs), county human service departments, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, other State or County agencies, etc. Be a cautious and conscientious consumer!

Submitted by Carolyn Small, Western Regional Coordinator, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
09/04/2009

Mobility Expo held at the Duluth DECC

A mobility expo was held at the Duluth DECC Monday Sept. 21. Displays included durable medical equipment, accessible vehicles, and transportation.

There were two adapted vans on exhibit. One van had a lowered floor and a power ramp for power wheelchairs. The other van had a lift on the back that would lift a power chair without the person sitting in it. IMED Mobility also rents accessible vans to consumers and is based in Roseville, Minnesota. To contact IMED Mobility, call 1-800-788-7479 and ask for Ron, or go to www.imedmobility.com

Other items were a DTA bus with a ramp. For “STRIDE” para-transit services, consumers are encouraged to contact STRIDE at 218-722-3327 or go to www.duluthtransit.com with any questions about how to coordinate group and individual rides in Superior. Another local transportation company provides special transportation services for wheelchair users. Pathways to Achievement may be reached at 218-721-4732.

There were many varieties of wheelchairs and walkers. Ki Mobility makes a lightweight wheelchair and can be reached at 1-800-981-1540. Freedom Designs makes a tilt-in-space wheelchair with a foot activated tilt. They may be reached at 1-800-331-8551. Medline makes a wide variety of durable medical equipment and may be reached at 1-800-MEDLINE or www.medline.com. Otto Bock makes “Sling Seat” walkers for children. They can be reached at 1-800-328-4058 or www.ottobockus.com. Midwest Mobility provides a wide variety of durable medical goods and can be reached at 218-722-3420 or 1-800-777-8390.

Call North Country Independent Living for additional information.

Russ Stover Joins North Country's Staff

I am very pleased to be a new staff member of North Country Independent Living. I will be working with the transportation voucher program and working on other tasks as an office assistant.

After years of believing in the independent living philosophy and having personally obtained my independent goals, I am now proud to make it my work, I have always been interested in the programs at NCIL and have always enjoyed stopping at the office or participating in events.

I grew up in Duluth and am pleased to say I was the first student with a disability to be "mainstreamed" in Independent School District 709 who used a wheelchair. I have previously been employed at Arrowhead Blacktop, Northland Constructors, the Duluth Children's Museum and served two terms on the Duluth City Council (Council President, 2007).

Some of my involvement in the community includes the Minnesota DOT Wheelchair Tie Down Task Force, Access Theater, Duluth Playhouse Board, Goodwill Board, and Duluth Human Rights Commission. I have also served on the Metropolitan Interstate Committee, the Duluth Environmental Advisory Committee and currently I am serving on the Community Action Duluth Board as President.

I live alone with Tipper, the dog, and Billy Bob, the cat, in a house I designed myself. My interests are classic cars and drag racing, including racing at Brainerd International Raceway. I have also finished Grandma's Marathon twice.

I look forward to working at North Country and helping consumers reach their goals.

STRIDE Action Team meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 10:30 a.m. at the Superior Public Library. Meetings are open to the public. For more information call Bob Olsgard at NCIL.

WISLOAN

WisLoan is a statewide, low interest loan program that allows a Wisconsin resident with a disability to purchase assistive technology or make home modifications so that he or she can live more independently or productively. **Contact North Country for more information.**

WisLoan is a federally-funded project of the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the U.S Dept. of Education.

Donation for North Country Independent Living

North Country welcomes your support in fulfilling its mission of empowering people with disabilities. Your contribution is tax deductible. North Country Independent Living is a non-profit agency with 501(c)3 status.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Name _____

Organization/Company _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Mail to:
North Country Independent Living
2231 Catlin Ave. Suite 16
Superior, WI 54880

I would like to volunteer at North Country

Board of Directors

Johnlee Nyberg, Minong
Mary Jane Grande, Ashland
Bill Gallik, Superior
Karen Secor, Montreal
Larry Quam, Superior
Jeff Kieffer, Catawba
Lauri Solberg, Superior
Denise Marquardt, Hayward
Lori Bina, Shell Lake

Superior Main Office

2231 Catlin Avenue, Suite 16
Superior, WI 54880
(715) 392-9118 Voice
(715) 392-9271 TTY
1-800-924-1220 V/TTY
TTY Message Line (ext. 23)
Visit us on the web at
www.northcountryil.org
Email: ncil@superior-nfp.org

John Nousaine, Director
nciljohn@superior-nfp.org
Gloria Hakkila-Johnson,
Assistant Director
ncilgloria@superior-nfp.org
Jim Glaeser, Accountant
nciljim@superior-nfp.org
Cheryl Edwards,
Administrative Assistant
ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org
Amy Brunette
Personal Care Coordinator
ncilamy@superior-nfp.org
Scott Anderson
Benefits Specialist
ncilscott@superior-nfp.org
Bob Olsgard
Transportation Coordinator
ncilbob@superior-nfp.org
Linda Burhans
Independent Living Specialist
ncillinda@superior-nfp.org

Russ Stover

Office Assistant
ncilruss@superior-nfp.org
Michele Beauto, R.N.
Care Coordinator
ncilmichele@superior-nfp.org

Ashland Branch Office

422 West Third Street, Suite 114
Ashland, WI 54806
(715) 682-5676 V/TTY
1-800-499-5676 V/TTY
John R. Nedden-Durst
Disability Navigator
nciljnd@superior-nfp.org
Stewart Holman
Independent Living Specialist
ncilstew@superior-nfp.org
Martha Oie
Grassroots Organizer
Independent Living Specialist
ncilmartha@superior-nfp.org

ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE

If you require any of this information in an alternate format, please contact us.