

POSITIVE VOICES—NOVEMBER 2009

Your Newsletter by Positive People for Positive People

The Pros and Cons of Getting Vaccinated for H1N1(Swine) Flu from the Medical Advocate

There are two types of the vaccine available: the flu shot, an inactivated vaccine containing fragments of killed influenza virus, and a nasal spray, which is made using a weakened live flu virus. The nasal spray will most likely be the first to be widely distributed, however certain groups, including pregnant women, young children and people with compromised immune systems, cannot receive the nasal spray. So far, officials of the National Institutes of Health say that in clinical trials they've seen no serious side effects and that study subjects who have been immunized have had a good response.

Most people who get the flu (either seasonal or H1N1) will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get flu complications that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. The flu can also make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may have worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu. The list below includes the groups of people more likely to get flu-related complications if they get sick from influenza.

People at High Risk for Flu Complications:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women

People who have:

- Weakened immune systems (such as people with HIV or AIDS or who are on medications that weaken the immune system)
- Cancer
- Blood disorders (including sickle cell disease)
- Chronic lung disease [such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)]
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kidney disorders
- Liver disorders
- Neurological disorders (such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, brain or spinal cord injuries, moderate to profound intellectual disability [mental retardation] or developmental delay)
- Neuromuscular disorders (such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)

Are people with HIV/AIDS at greater risk than other people of infection with H1N1 flu?

At the present time, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has no information about the risk of the H1N1 flu in people with HIV/AIDS. In the past, people with HIV/AIDS have not appeared to be at any greater risk than the general population for infection with routine seasonal influenza. However, HIV-infected adults and adolescents, and especially persons with low CD4 cell counts or AIDS, can experience more severe complications of seasonal influenza. It is therefore possible that HIV-infected adults and adolescents are also at higher risk for complications from infection with the H1N1 flu virus.

What can people with HIV/AIDS do to protect themselves from H1N1 flu?

If you decide not to get the H1N1 vaccine, you should continue to take the same precautions you would take with seasonal flu:

- Wash your hands often (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water aren't available)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands – germs spread this way
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people
- Use a facemask if you are in an environment where people may have the flu. They may not look pretty, but they work!

Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle; eat right, get enough sleep, and reduce stress as much as possible. Staying healthy reduces your risk of getting infected by influenza and other infections. Staying healthy also helps your immune system fight off a flu infection should it occur. If you are currently taking antiretrovirals (HIV meds) or antimicrobial prophylaxis against opportunistic infections (such as Bactrim) you should adhere to your prescribed treatment and follow the advice of your health care provider in order to maximize the health of your immune system.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 influenza?

Signs and symptoms of infection with the H1N1 influenza are generally the same as for seasonal influenza: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, body aches (muscle aches or joint pain), chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu.

What should people with HIV/AIDS do if they think they may have H1N1 flu?

HIV-infected people should do the same things as they would do for routine seasonal flu – contact your health care provider and follow his or her instructions.

He or she will determine if laboratory testing or treatment is needed. If you are sick, stay home and keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. If you have H1N1 flu, you should stay at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

If you need to go to a doctor's office, to an emergency room, or to any other healthcare facility to be evaluated, cover your mouth and nose with a facemask, if a facemask is available and tolerable, or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Let the office staff know you are there because you think you might have H1N1 flu.

Treatment and chemoprophylaxis (prevention) for H1N1

The H1N1 virus is sensitive to the antiviral medications zanamivir (Relenza, an inhaled powder) and oseltamivir (Tamiflu, a pill). The flu medications Symmetrel (amantadine) and Flumadine (rimantadine) are not effective against this particular strain of influenza. Relenza or Tamiflu can be safely combined with antiretrovirals (ARVs) used to treat HIV. These medications work much like ARVs—they prevent the influenza virus from reproducing in the body. If someone becomes ill with influenza, including H1N1, Relenza or Tamiflu can minimize symptoms and speed up recovery. They may also prevent serious flu complications. HIV-infected adults and adolescents who have confirmed, probable, or suspected H1N1 virus infection should receive treatment. HIV-infected adults and adolescents who are in close contact of persons with probable or confirmed cases of H1N1 virus infection should receive Relenza or Tamiflu. Preventive treatment should be initiated as soon as possible after the onset of influenza symptoms, with benefits expected to be greatest if started within 48 hours of onset (when you first started feeling sick). The recommended duration of treatment (if you are sick) is five days. Recommended duration of prevention treatment is 10 days after your last exposure (to someone with the flu).

Where can I find the vaccine?

Check with your doctor, your children's school and your local public health department. Right now, there's no central list of locations where H1N1 flu vaccine will be offered, but the Department of Health and Human Services plans on putting information on www.flu.gov as soon as possible.

To sum it all up, you should get vaccinated for H1N1 when it becomes available. You can always choose not to get vaccinated, but you should be aware of the potential complications if you do get sick. The choice is yours!

From the Director of Client Services

I was very pleased to hear that so many folks are interested in staying updated with the changes in our STAP family. The Client Services Department has been so blessed this past year, as we have not experienced any turnover in case management staffing in Johnson City since December. This new trend is unheard of in the Health and Human Services world, and as much as I would love to credit it to our fabulous staff and administration, I believe the harsh and difficult economy has played a huge part in this new reality. But all good things must come to an end, and with that STAP expects an exciting new beginning....

I am please to update you on Stacy Nickerson, former Assistant Director of Client Services. She "retired" from STAP after 7 years of excellent service. Michelle McElroy, former Medical Advocacy Coordinator was promoted to Assistant Director of Client Services and is now managing our satellite offices (Elmira, Ithaca and Oneonta.) Robin Carroll, formerly a Broome County based case manager for STAP was promoted to the position of Medical Advocacy Coordinator and will begin learning her new duties in mid-November. Nicole Miller, Case Manager for Broome and Chenango counties has accepted a position with AIDS Community Health Center in Rochester, NY!! Although we knew this was coming since she graduated with her Master's degree in May, we are all very excited for Nicole and the new opportunities that await her. Nicole will be moving to the Rochester area, her last day at STAP is Friday, October 30, 2009. Jenniffer Brown, Case Manager Technician in the Broome county area, has accepted a case manager position at Fairview Recovery Services starting November 1st. Jenn has experience with Addiction Recovery Services and is excited to get back to her "roots" and concentrate on her CASAC credentials. Her last day at STAP will be 10/27/09.

So by now you're probably wondering who is left??? All positions were posted and we are anticipating a very quick turnaround. Interviews to fill the three vacant positions (Robin's, Nicole's & Jenn's) will be held in late October and we are expecting to recruit some great new energetic staff...who knows, you may even see a familiar face return as a result of all the changes!!! I will keep you informed as to new developments in our staffing. Till next time...stay warm and be good to each other!

ARTICLE FROM A CLIENT

On Saturday October 10th, I had the opportunity to ride the Cooperstown and Charlotte Valley Railroad train leaving from Milford, NY. Quite a gang of us young and old, 2 legged and 4 legged ventured on the train full of outlaws; today was a special train robbery event. The surprising thing is these bandits with an array of pistols, rifles were hard to dislike, and for some reason they were friendly even while trying to look mean and rough. They threatened to shoot apples off of a child's head and do other dastardly acts. Of course, none of it happened. Great things happened as we rode the rails that cool Saturday, there were new friendships made, reunions of old acquaintances, passengers, and villains realized they were neighbors. Those that decided to walk from car, most of them had trouble trying to walk in a straight line as the train chugged along and you could hear them say to someone "Really I'm not drunk". I believed them and sat in my chair during the ride.

Those looking out the windows had a beautiful view of the fall foliage and the staged robbing of the train. It was great fun as the safe got blown up and the outlaws shot their black powder rifles. I have to admit, I was not looking forward to riding the train, but our hosts from People Who Care (alias STAP) took care of each of us with food and laughter. I hope that those that missed the train will take advantage of it next year or if they are in the area on their own. To find more information, the website is www.lrhs.com. ALL A BOARD! – Bill P.

HOLIDAY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Toys for Tots (children birth through 12 years)

Sign-ups Nov 30th through Dec 11 (Mon-Sat) **Birth Certificate** needed for each child (benefits cards or green card may be accepted on cases-by case review) and **photo ID** of parent (or legal guardian with court papers) who is registering the child. Location not set yet. Watch newspaper for location of call First Call For Help at 729-9100 or 1-800-227-5353 around Thanksgiving.

Pre-Thanksgiving Community Turkey Dinner

West Family YMCA

Sunday, Nov 15th, 1:30-3:30PM

740 Main St., Johnson City, NY

Everyone welcome!

Annual STAP Client Holiday Dinner

Tuesday, Nov 17th, 5PM

Trinity Memorial Church

44 Main Street, Binghamton, NY

Please call 1-800-333-0892 to reserve your seat!

Live entertainment and giveaways!

Staff, Volunteers, Clients and their families are welcome!

Thanksgiving Eve Dinner

Wednesday Nov. 25th, 5PM

Salvation Army

127 Washington St., Binghamton

Thanksgiving Day Meals

November 26th, 11:30AM-2 PM

Binghamton High School

31 Main St., Binghamton, NY

For delivery, call by Nov. 24th

729-9100 or 1-800-227-5353

Whitney Point First UMC

Nov 26th, Noon

7311 Collin St., Whitney Point

Call 692-3638 for delivery

Christmas Eve Dinner

Dec 24th, 5PM

Salvation Army

127 Washington St., Binghamton

Christmas Day Dinner

Dec 25th, Noon to 4PM

American Legion Post 80

73 Main St, Binghamton

Call ahead for delivery

729-9100 or 1-800-227-5353

Holiday Sign-ups

Windsor School District Residents Only

Sign-up: Tues/Thurs 10AM-Noon; Wed 4-6PM.

Registration forms on the pantry door.

Aug. 12th through Nov 12th for Thanksgiving Basket

Aug. 12th through Dec 10th for Christmas Food Basket and gifts for children birth through 12 years. New clients need to bring ID and current utility bill with a physical address.

Whitney Point School District Call 692-8202

Deposit Area Residents

Contact Deposit Foundation 467-4000 for Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Baskets.

Toys for Tots for youth birth through 18 yrs living at home.

WORLD AIDS DAY EVENT

Come Together and Make a Difference!!! The 2009 World AIDS Day Event will be held on Friday, December 4 from 6PM-9PM. The event will be held at Binghamton University in the Downtown Center Atrium. It will be an evening of art, music and action. There will be a special show and sale of jewelry that were handcrafted by women living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya. All proceeds directly benefit the Jifahamu Kenya Foundation. This event is supported by STAP. SAVE THE DATE!!!!

PWA'S INVITED TO BINGHAMTON NETWORK MEETING

The next Network Meeting in Binghamton will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2009. Once again the location will be Trinity Memorial Church, 44 Main Street. This meeting will begin at 12:30 and will include lunch. Plan on ending at 2:00, although we can run until 2:30 if necessary.

We are reaching out to PWAs to invite them to the Network meeting to help focus discussion on the three priorities being addressed in National AIDS Policy deliberations: Reducing HIV incidence; Increasing access to care; Reducing HIV-related health disparities.

Time will also be spent discussing future plans and priorities. We have not yet made a decision on how to provide staffing for the Tri-County region. The rest of the meeting will be devoted to discussion of National AIDS Policy. Upstate Networks have an exciting opportunity to participate in a conference call with Jeffrey Crowley, National AIDS Policy Director, on December 9. This call is being organized as a result of John Wikiera's observation to the AIDS Institute that Mr. Crowley's planned live forum in New York City does not afford opportunity to hear from PWAs living elsewhere in the state.

As a result of a preliminary planning call with Dan Tietz, AI Consumer Advocate, on October 14 we now have guidance on preparing for the 12/9 call. The Network will be conferring with PWAs in a variety of settings to obtain input and begin to develop testimony. PWAs will be the actual participants on the December call.

NOVEMBER EVENTS FOR TEENS AT THE BROOME COUNTY LIBRARY

The following groups and events are being offered to teens for the month of November:

Make Your Own SlideShow With PowerPoint/November 17 6PM/Want to impress your teacher with a great presentation? Have some digital photos you want to show off? Come and learn how. These events are for youth ages 13-18 and are held at the Broome County Public Library at 185 Court Street, Binghamton. For more information, please call 607-778-6456.

TO TELL OR NOT: GENERAL DISCLOSURE TIPS FROM AIDS MEDS.COM

- ◆ You don't have to tell everyone. The choice is yours about whom to tell. Be selective.
- ◆ Be sure to consider the five "W's" when thinking about disclosure: who, what, when, where and why. Who do you need to tell? What do you want to tell them about your HIV infection, and what are you expecting from the person you are disclosing your HIV status to? When should you tell them? Where is the best place to have this conversation? Why are you telling them?
- ◆ Easy does it. In most situations, you can take your time to consider who to tell and how.
- ◆ Consider whether there is a real purpose for you to tell this person or if you are simply feeling anxious and want to "dump" your feelings.
- ◆ Telling people indiscriminately may affect your life in ways you haven't considered.
- ◆ Having feelings of uncertainty about disclosing is a very common reaction in this situation.
- ◆ You have a virus. That doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. You don't have anything to apologize for simply because you are HIV positive.
- ◆ Keep it simple. You don't have to tell the story of your life.
- ◆ Avoid isolating yourself about your status. If you are still not able to tell close friends, family members or other loved ones about your HIV status, allow yourself to draw upon the support and experience available to you, through organized groups in the HIV community. Consider the AIDSmeds.com community forums for example.
- ◆ There's no perfect roadmap for how to disclose. Trust your instinct, not your fears.
- ◆ Whatever the response you receive in a specific situation, and even if it doesn't go the way you'd hoped, you're going to survive it and your life will go on.
- ◆ Millions of others have dealt with this experience and have found their way through it. You will get through it too.

◆ Choosing whom to tell or not tell is your personal decision. It's your choice and your right.

In the following section, we take a closer look at some of the specific circumstances in which disclosure may be particularly important to you.

Dating and Sexual Partners

For those who are single and are HIV positive, if and when to disclose can be addressed in different ways. Some people prefer to get the issue out into the open immediately. They will make their HIV infection known right away, sometimes even before a first date. Others prefer to wait and see if the relationship is going to develop beyond a first date or casual dating. Still others feel that as long they're having safer sex, the risk is minimal to the other person, so why even bring the subject up.

With regards to dating, or in casual or anonymous sexual situations, conventional wisdom holds that people with HIV are supposed to inform other people before having sex with them. In 34 states, there are specific laws relating to disclosure which actually make it a crime not to disclose. Most of these laws were passed in the early years of the epidemic and reflected ignorance and fear about HIV. As a matter of practicality, they have generally proven difficult to enforce.

If you have any concern about your state's laws as they apply to your HIV disclosure, you might want to research the subject through your state's Department of Health or get in touch with your local AIDS service organization to discuss what's on your mind. The reality is that, if you're practicing safer sex consistently, the risk to others is low, and ultimately what realistically matters most is what you do sexually, not what you say.

Perhaps the real benefit of disclosing to a date or to a casual or anonymous sex partner is for you personally. It takes strength of character to be honest in such a circumstance. At the same time, telling someone you are HIV positive at the beginning of a possible relationship or before having sex puts you in a vulnerable position. It's never easy to predict if you'll receive a positive or negative response.

Although now many more people know about safer sex and how the virus is transmitted, fear and stigma are still a reality in relation to HIV, and disclosure can stir up very strong emotions in others. You need to know that your status will deter some from proceeding further while many will not allow it stand in the way of either sex or a relationship.

General dating and sexual partner disclosure issues to consider:

- ◆ Keep what you say as simple and as direct as possible.
- ◆ Give yourself credit if you have been practicing safer sex with the sexual partner you're disclosing your status to. You are already behaving responsibly with that person.
- ◆ If the person you're disclosing to reacts negatively, remember that's only one person. Not everyone is going to react the same way.
- ◆ Remember that you should give the person you're disclosing your status to sometime process the information. Whatever their reaction may be at first, whether negative or positive, be aware that reactions can change in time.

YOUTH CULTURE WORKSHOP

The Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier is having their Annual Cultural and Linguistic Competence Workshop on November 20 from 9:30am-4:00pm at Decker Room, Broome Public Library. They will discuss youth culture, including internet culture, bullies, depression and more. It's open to mental health providers, consumers, their family members, and the public.

If you would like to attend, please contact Doris Cheung, MA/Cultural Diversity Director/Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier/153 Court St., Binghamton, NY 13901/(607) 771-8888; fax (607) 771-8892

GILEAD PHARMACEUTICALS DINNER

The next Gilead Pharmaceuticals dinner at Grande's, originally scheduled for Thursday Oct. 29, has been rescheduled for Thursday, November 5. If you RSVP'd for the 29th and can't attend the one on the 5th, please let Bill know. We are trying to make sure that almost all seats are taken by clients, so your response to RSVP or cancel is critical. Gilead has to pay for each empty seat that was originally RSVP'd, and equally important, clients are being turned down as we think that the guest list is full. Thank you for assisting us maintain this vital and educational series for people who are affected by the virus.

HIV POSITIVE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE LINE

Rural Connect recently secured phone lines to support a weekly call specific to HIV Positive Women living in NY. The women's calls are scheduled for the end of the year and will take place every Tuesdays from 10 am - 12 pm. Lynn Atwood of Syracuse, NY will be the call facilitator. please contact me for more details and questions.***Women in Rural Communities get priority***. Every Tuesday from 10 AM-12PM. All Calls are Confidential. The Call Facilitators are always HIV+. Space is limited to 18 Callers! Conference calls currently include topics such as disclosure, adherence, access to services, living skills, and barriers to services or any topic that the callers want to bring up! As a person living with HIV, I have found these calls to be helpful in ending isolation particularly to those living in rural areas with little to no transportation. **(Registered Callers will receive 800# and access Code). You can register by contacting Paul Carr at CNYHSA (315)472-8099 or pcarr@cnyhsa.com. The Facilitator is Lynn Atwood. This is a program of CNYHSA Inc.& Central New York HIV Care Network.**

ON-GOING MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

JOIN CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE [CAC] MEETINGS

The STAP Consumer Advisory Committee is a committee facilitated by and made up of consumers (STAP clients) who welcome other consumers and their significant others, caretakers and family members to join them on the second Tuesday of each month. This collaborative effort provides a confidential space for clients to make recommendations regarding STAP client services and other programs in a non-judgmental environment.

The meetings are held following the Friends Dinner at 6:15 at Trinity Memorial Church (on the corner of Main & Oak Streets) in downtown Binghamton.

Call 1-800-333-0892 for directions or more details.

If you cannot attend these meetings, mail your opinions or suggestions to STAP, 122 Baldwin Street, Johnson City, 13790, Attention CAC. CAC is encouraging consumers in other counties to organize monthly meetings in their area. Contact your case manager to discuss developing CAC in your community.

THE DRAGON SLAYERS

Hepatitis C and Co-Infection Support Group. Meetings at 6:00 – 7:00PM on alternate Tuesdays at Trinity M, 44 Main Street, Oak Street Entrance in Binghamton. For information, call (607) 798-1706.

FRIENDS DINNER

Friends meet every Tuesday evening for a time of fellowship and good food. Join us at Trinity Memorial Church (on the corner of Main & Oak Streets) in downtown Binghamton. Doors open at 5PM and dinner is served between 5:30 & 5:45. No charge, just come with a smile and a friendly attitude – ready to meet and greet friends and have a hearty meal.

Parking is available on Oak Street behind the Church Annex. Use the Oak Street entrance for the cafeteria. Free bus passes are available for STAP clients! Call your case manager for details. Bus passes available for transportation to/from the Friends Dinner only. For more information call Bill at 607-724-0103.

FREE ANONYMOUS RAPID HIV TESTING

Walk-in Anonymous testing every Monday from 1:00 – 4:30PM and Thursday from 1:00 – 3:00PM at STAP's office, 122 Baldwin Street, Johnson City, NY.

For information and other testing times available through the month, please call (607) 798-1706. Confidential Rapid Testing is also available Friday 9AM- Noon & by Appointment.

ONEONTA SOCIAL GROUP

Oneonta Social Group every Saturday at the First Methodist Church, 66 Chestnut Street in the Dolly Room from 12:30PM-1:30PM. HIV/AIDS and affected welcome – Brunch is between 11:30-1PM. This is not an official STAP Group.

ASK THE MEDICAL ADVOCATE

- Have general questions or concerns regarding HIV?
- Want to better manage side effects of your HIV medications?
- Concerned about interactions between your HIV meds and other meds that you take?
- Want to better understand the results of your blood work or other lab tests?
- Concerned about HIV exposure risks to your negative partner?
- Interested in alternative or complementary therapies for HIV?

STAP's Medical Advocate, James Elrod, is available to answer your questions—by phone, email, or in person—you choose! It's a great way to get a direct, individualized answer to your questions. Contact James at (607) 426-9445, or by email: jelrod@stapinc.org

HOPE DISPENSARY OF THE SOUTHERN TIER

The Hope Dispensary of the Southern Tier, a service provided by Lourdes Hospital, is a new program designed to provide medications to those that are uninsured or underinsured and have a limited income. Here is how you qualify:

1. You must have no prescription coverage
2. Have a photo ID or Social Security Card
3. Bring one of any of the following as proof of income: Pay Stubs or Bank Statement, SSI/SSD paperwork or Unemployment or Pink Slip form from employer.
4. Bring proof of residency – one piece of mail with your name and address, such as a phone bill, NYSEG bill or cable bill.
5. Bring the prescription with you

If you need assistance with providing this information to determine eligibility, they have an onsite Social Worker who can help you with the process. There is a monthly income level that you cannot exceed. The information is listed on the next page.

Family Size and Monthly Income

1 = \$1,805	2 = \$2,428
3 = \$3,052	4 = \$3,675
5 = \$4,298	6 = \$4,922
7 = \$5,545	8 = \$6,168

The Hope Dispensary will verify your information onsite and the Social Worker that is present each day they are open will also provide screenings for financial assistance to access 50% discounted up to possibly free healthcare in the Lourdes network. This is great information!!!

Hope Dispensary does not carry all medications. They do cover HIV medication as well as antidepressants. *They do not carry any controlled substances or birth control.* If they do not have the medication that you need, they have programs developed so that you might qualify for free medication directly from the pharmaceutical corporations. They use medication samples and generic medications. They are located at 477 State Street in Binghamton and their number is 607-584-9376. They are open Monday through Friday from 10AM – 6PM.

New LGBT Information Site Launched

www.asaging.org/larc

The American Society on Aging has created a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Aging Resources Clearinghouse that holds information related to and resources for people aged 50 and older. The site's searchable resources span several categories: education and training; health and mental health; housing and support services; populations and communities; and public policy, advocacy, and legal issues. Also available are annotated listings for service providers, community and professional organizations, information sites, reports and articles, and links for ordering DVDs, books, and other useful products.

PROJECT ATTAIN

The Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking Center holds free classes each month to help people get the training they need to be comfortable using important computer software programs. Call 607-772-4771/www.bul.sunyeoc.org. Classes are FREE!!!!

FREE CELL PHONES

There is a government sponsored program available that can provide you with a free cell phone and 68 free minutes per month. Eligibility is based on your participation in one of several State or government programs like PUBLIC HOUSING, FOOD STAMPS, MEDICAID and more. There is also a limit to the amount of income you receive each month. This program is called LifeLine Assistance and you can find out about it through safelink.com or calling 1-800-378-1684. If you need help with the application process, please call your STAP case manager for assistance.