

POSITIVE VOICES-MAY 2010

Your Newsletter by Positive People for Positive People

LGBTQ Adult Education Series: Three evenings in May and June 2010

Come out and find out about current issues of importance to members of the lesbian/gay/ bisexual/ transgender/ queer communities. You may attend one or all of the programs in the series. Allies welcome! Refreshments will be served. Free to all attendees but registration is required. Got questions? You may submit specific questions or raise individual concerns in advance of the sessions, so that the speakers can be prepared to address them. Please RSVP to Ethan Lewis, Mpowerment Coordinator, ethan@thecubebinghamton.org, 607.651.9175.

The LGBTQ Adult Education Series is presented by The Cube (thecubebinghamton.org), The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project (PrideAndJoyFamilies.org) and Temple Concord's Social Action Committee (TempleConcord.com).

Session #1: Advance Health Care Planning

Tuesday, May 18, 7-8:30 pm at Identity, 206 State Street, Binghamton, NY

Tanya Walker, Action for Older Persons, will give a presentation on the topic of Advance Planning. Participants will learn how to make their wishes regarding medical treatment known should they become incapacitated. Tanya will discuss Health Care Proxies, Living Wills, and DNR (do not resuscitate) orders. This workshop is especially important to the LGBTQ communities because sometimes our loved ones are not legally in line to make decisions regarding our health. We need to make sure that the correct people will be left in charge of our health care decisions should something stop us from being able to make them for ourselves.

Session #2: Financial Considerations for LGBTQ People

Tuesday, May 25, 7-8:30 pm at Identity, 206 State Street, Binghamton, NY

An October 2009 article in the New York Times ("The High Price of Being a Gay Couple," by Tara Siegel Bernard and Ron Lieber) put a price tag on what many of us have long known: that same-sex couples bear extra health, legal and other costs, as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. The authors came up with a figure of \$41,196 (best case scenario) to \$467,562 (worst case) over a lifetime. RJ Barber, Financial Consultant, will discuss special financial planning considerations for LGBTQ people at a session devoted entirely to the subject. Bring a friend and your questions.

Session #3: "To Marry or Not to Marry?"

Thursday, June 3, 7-8:30 pm at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Drive, Binghamton, NY

Join Binghamton_Attorney Judith Osburn for an evening with members of the LGBTQ and allied communities to help us sort through the complexities of same-sex marriage in New York State.

While NY does not permit marriage between people of the same sex, an Executive Order by the Governor requires entities within the State to recognize legal marriages performed elsewhere. Come out and find out what this means for NYS residents.

For further information about the Series or its cosponsors, contact Claudia E. Stallman, Project Director, Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project, lesgayfambldg@aol.com, 607.724.4308.

SOUTHERN TIER AIDS PROGRAM RAISES MORE THAN \$75,000 FROM AIDS WALK

By Nancy [Dooling from pressconnects.com/April 17](http://pressconnects.com/April_17), 2010

Walkers and runners Saturday April 17, 2010 raised more than \$75,000 for the Southern Tier AIDS Program - a record amount, STAP officials said. That's welcome news for the agency, which provides community services to people with HIV/AIDS in eight counties, including Broome, said Mary Kaminsky, STAP's Director of Development. "This is our best year ever" Kaminsky said.

More than 500 people turned out Saturday, dodging random snowflakes at Binghamton's Recreational Park for the annual fund-raiser. The good news comes at a time when state funding for community agencies is being cut or discontinued, said Paul Rushanski, STAP Board President. The money raised Saturday will be used to replace state aid or pay for on-going services, Rushanski said.

The president had challenged its 13 board members to raise \$10,000 this year. Instead they more than doubled that amount, raising \$20,384, organizers said. Rushanski raised \$6,500 - more than any other individual walker. Joshua B/Ludzki of fm radio station STAR 105.7 raised \$3,085, the second highest amount raised by individual organizers said. Ludski is also a board member at STAP. "The support for this agency and its mission is unbelievable. It's unprecedented", Rushanski said.

Frank and Angela Carro's support has never waived. The Johnson City couple's son, Robbie Carro, died of AIDS four years ago. They founded "Robbie's Pantry", which provided free toiletries for people with AIDS. "We do this in the memory of our son", Frank Carro said. This year Team Robbie's 72 walkers raised \$12,558. A team from Frito-Lay raised about \$6,000, including a matching corporate grant, organizers said.

Becky Smith puts a human face on the disease. She was diagnosed with AIDS in 1994. The Town of Chenango woman walked in Saturday's event as an AIDS survivor. "Anything I can do to lessen the stigma of the disease", she said afterwards. "If I can help one person hold on to their dignity, I will".

FROM THE MEDICAL ADVOCATES

The STAP Medical Advocacy Team is pleased to announce a new program,
CHOICES
(Choosing Healthy Options and Improving Client Empowerment Skills), available
to all STAP clients!

The CHOICES program is designed to offer participants the opportunity to learn more about HIV, its impact on the body, and the many healthy options available to combat HIV and the side effects of medications. In short, CHOICES is all about YOU and how you can be HEALTHY and HAPPY! In addition to the educational benefits of CHOICES, if participants choose to complete at least ten of the topics (modules) listed below, they will be eligible to become a STAP Peer Mentor and can work with other STAP clients to share what they have learned and to be a source of support for other people who are living with HIV/AIDS. Or, just sign up for the six core modules for your own personal learning!

Required: (6 modules)

- HIV 101 (Transmission, Life Cycle & Disease Progression)
- Adherence & Resistance
- Medications (Classes, Actions, Overview, Side Effects & Managing Them)
- Immune System
- Understanding Your Labs Overview
- Men's & Women's Health Concerns

Optional: (pick any 4 or more)

- Advanced Understanding Your Labs
- Dental Care & Oral Concerns
- Anatomy Overview
- Sleep (Importance, Healing, Techniques, Medications)
- Nutrition (My Pyramid, HIV+ Nutrition, Vitamins & Minerals)
- Hepatitis B & C (Transmission, Concerns & Treatments)
- Smoking Cessation & Lung Health
- Alcohol & Drug Use
- Cholesterol & Heart Health
- Exercise
- Diabetes (Medical Complications, Management, Diet)
- Kidney & Liver Health
- Secondary Prevention
- Mental Health & Stress Management

You can also choose to complete a single module, if you don't want to commit to enrolling in CHOICES program for the full series of topics. Required modules must be completed first, but can be completed in any order, based on your needs and preferences.

Optional modules can be chosen in any order after completing the six required modules. You can participate in CHOICES through individual meetings with the Medical Advocacy Team, via webcam, or through group training sessions.

Reasons you may want to consider CHOICES:

1. Starting or restarting treatment(s)
2. Having trouble with current treatment(s)
3. Changing treatment(s)
4. Desire to become a Peer Mentor

If you have any questions, or would like to enroll in the CHOICES program, please contact the Medical Advocacy Team!

Robin Carroll, Medical Advocacy Coordinator (Broome, Delaware, Otsego Counties) 607-206-3418

James Elrod, Medical Advocate (Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Tioga, Tompkins Counties) 607-426-9445

SAVE THE DATE!!! "JOURNEYS" SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR CLIENTS ONLY FROM JUNE 15 - 17, 2010.

STAP will be holding this year's client only spiritual retreat from Tuesday, June 15 - through Thursday, June 17, 2010 at the Sky Lake Retreat Center in Windsor, NY. The mission of this very special retreat is to assist individuals in finding their inner strength by awakening spiritual awareness as a means to deal with the difficulties of living with HIV/AIDS. This unique experience offers 3 days/2 nights of education, spiritual growth and an opportunity to meet others impacted by HIV/AIDS. Come make new friends, learn about your own spiritual journey and draw strength from a refreshed perspective on life. There is no cost to you, but we will require a \$10 deposit which is refundable to those that attend the entire retreat and will be returned to participants on the last day of the retreat. Financial assistance may be available for those experiencing hardship. To express your interest, please find the inserted flyer in this newsletter, complete all of the information and mail it back in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. You will then be contacted by mail with more details. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Retreat Coordinator, Carrie Juraska on her cell phone: (607) 725-2027 or via email: cjuraska@stapinc.org. More information will be in the June issue of Positive Voices.

NEW INFORMATION!!!! WANT A JOB WITH CENSUS 2010????

Apply today!! More information, including a practice test, is available at: www.2010censusjobs.gov or call toll free at 1-866-2010. Hourly wages run from \$14.00 upwards depending on your location and size of county. Give them a call TODAY!!!

Community Art Class at The Cube Taught by Angelo Fiori

STAP Board Member and Volunteer Angelo Fiori is starting a Community Art Class. It will be held at The Cube on Thursday Evenings, 7-10 PM starting March 4th, as a weekly class at first. Depending on the funds raised and interest, it would be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. The class would be open to all groups: HIV positive, HIV negative, LGBTQ community, gay or straight. His vision of this art class is to be one of and about our community and coming together to respect each other's differences. Please show up if you are interested in participating in this Community Art Class. The class will include drawing, collage, watercolor, painting and more. Beginners and all are welcome to participate to bring out their artistic possibilities and great discussions.

The Cube address: 208 State Street, Binghamton, NY 13901

FROM KAREN'S MEDICINE SHOPPE PHARMACY CORNER

At the end of last month's article, I mentioned the fact that Norvir has just become available in a tablet form that no longer requires refrigeration, so I thought I would feature it this month.

Norvir belongs to a class of medications called Protease Inhibitors. As we have been learning about HIV and the medications available to treat it, there are different ways to attack its progression. Inhibiting the enzyme protease helps slow the replication of HIV. Protease is needed by the body to complete the process of HIV replicating and inserting itself in to new cells.

Norvir currently comes in a 100mg capsule, a 100mg tablet and an oral solution. The drawback to the 100mg capsule that is currently used most commonly, is that it should be kept refrigerated. A bottle of Norvir capsules can be kept at room temperature as long as it is used within 30 days, but refrigeration is still recommended. The new tablet formulation can be stored at room temperature at all times.

The dosing for Norvir, if it is the only protease inhibitor being used is 600mg twice a day. Much more frequently however, we see Norvir not being used as single therapy, but as a booster for another protease inhibitor. Because of the complicated way our bodies metabolize Norvir, it actually can interact in a favorable way with other protease inhibitors to make them work better. The dosing for using Norvir as a booster is generally 100mg one to two times a day.

Using Norvir at this lower dose as a booster also lowers the potential for side effects. The medication commonly causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and abdominal pain. I noted in my research that the manufacturer states that patients may experience more of these type side effects when switching from the capsule to the tablet formulation due to the fact that the tablet actually leads to a higher concentration of medication in the blood. It also states that these side effects generally diminish as therapy is continued.

Some other important side effects to note are increases in triglycerides and cholesterol, onset of diabetes and high blood sugar, and changes in where your body distributes its fat. None of these are reasons to discontinue the medication, and your doctor can safely treat these problems if they occur.

Finally, I want to go over what medications are not safe to take when you are taking Norvir. First, Amiodarone, which is a common medication used to treat heart arrhythmias. Also, Ergotamine containing medications, which are not very common anymore, but can be found in some of the older migraine headache medications. Next, and I think this is important to mention, Simvastatin and Lovastatin, two very common medications used to treat high cholesterol. The reason that I think this is important for you to know, is that I can almost guarantee that if your doctor writes you a prescription for Lipitor to treat your cholesterol (which is safe to use with Norvir at low doses), your insurance company is going to try and get you to switch to Simvastatin or Lovastatin because they are generic and much less expensive. You need to be your own advocate in case your insurance company tries to do this. No switch can be made without your doctor's approval, but in dealing with prior approvals and insurance companies every day I can tell you that something like that could easily slip through and be changed. The drug interaction list continues to some of the older and less widely used sedatives and it even includes a common over the counter herbal medication called St John's Wort. Taking Norvir with St. John's Wort can actually lower the concentration of Norvir in your blood which in turn lowers its effectiveness and increases the chance of building resistance to the drug.

I hope that this month's article has been helpful to you and answered any questions you may have. Remember, you can always forward me questions and/or ideas for future articles through STAP. Have a great month.

Karen L Conn Rph

FROM CANDACE IN THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

1. Thank you to all who came out in force to the 2010 AIDS Walk / Run. It was a huge success.
2. I have been contacted by the Kalurah Shriners Circus. I will have vouchers for the Circus. You will have to take the voucher to the box office at least ONE WEEK before the Circus starts. This allows you to pick the day and time you want to attend. It will be on a first come first serve basis. If you are looking for tickets to other events please feel free to contact me.
Candace - Volunteer Coordinator - 1-800-333-0892

NEWS FROM ITHACA: - Robbie and Carol from Ithaca are very interested in starting a meal, movie, game etc. gathering in the Ithaca area. They need to know if anyone is interested. So if you are interested, please contact Robbie at 607-229-7446.

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 or Brian Wieder at 607-724-1272 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 9AM - Noon (Anonymous) 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. In Ithaca, Tuesdays from 9 AM - 11:30 AM (Anonymous) and confidential testing can be arranged Thursdays, 9 AM - 11:30 AM.

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 ADVOCATES

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?

Robin Carroll, Medical Advocacy Coordinator (Broome, Delaware, Otsego Counties) 607-206-3418

James Elrod, Medical Advocate (Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Tioga, Tompkins Counties) 607-426-9445

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.

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.

THE CUBE

The Cube is located at 208 State Street, Binghamton. It is open for drop-in education or just hang out and have fun with others in the LGBTQ Community on Tuesdays from 5:00 - 9:00PM and on Thursdays from 5:00 - 11:00PM. For information on The Cube and when it will be open for other activities, call Jon at (607) 651-9175 or check out their website at www.i3mpowerment.org. Here are some of the additional groups and events that they have at The Cube:

Men's Group - Peer discussion group for gay, bisexual or Men who sex with Men and questioning guys. Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7:00PM

New York AIDS Coalition Remembers Ryan White Two Decades Later

Edited from a press release from Brittany Allen/NYAC Executive Director

On April 8, 2010, the HIV/AIDS clients, activists, supporters, family members and the healthcare community commemorated the death of a very courageous boy. Twenty years ago Ryan White died due to complications from AIDS. In 1990 with the HIV/AIDS epidemic still in its first decade and raging unchecked, America and the world's response to people living with HIV/AIDS was drastically different. Throughout the 1980's many Americans thought of AIDS as a gay disease. All the while the government's response was deplorable, ranging from complete silence to neglect and stigmatization. In the mid 1980's while facing discrimination from school, Ryan White changed all of that. For millions of Americans, the teenager from Kokomo, Indiana became the face of AIDS - the only person they knew living with the new and deadly disease.

Working with a multitude of entertainers and athletes, Ryan White became a national spokesperson for HIV/AIDS. He fought for love and understanding, as well as increased government funding to address the epidemic of our lifetime. White know firsthand that HIV/AIDS spreads far and beyond the gay community, reaching communities of color, the world's poor, heterosexuals as well as children. Since White's death two decades ago, over half a million American's have died of AIDS, while nearly 50,000 continue to become newly infected each year. Worldwide, millions have died and nearly 35 million are living with HIV/AIDS across the globe.

In August 1990, just four months following White's death, Congress enacted the largest piece of HIV/AIDS treatment legislation in the nation and named it after him. Known as the Ryan White CARE Act, this law has provided a number of life saving HIV/AIDS services to American throughout all 50 states, in big cities, sprawling suburbs and rural villages alike.

We remember Ryan White twenty years ago and celebrate his life. He broke down the barriers of discrimination for so many people living with HIV/AIDS, living with dignity and tenacity up until the end. It is hard to imagine that White would now be 38 years old, but his fight - our fight - continues. With tens of thousands newly infected each year, we must increase our efforts to prevent the further spread of HIV and educated people in all walks of life. We must also care for those already infected. The HIV/AIDS epidemic cut short White's life, as well as the lives of countless others. Let us all take a moment and reflect on the life and legacy of the brave young man, Ryan White.

EDUCATE ADVOCATE MOBILIZE SPEAK WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

EDUCATE ADVOCATE MOBILIZE VOLUNTEER

Camp Good Days and Special Times at Camp Courage/TLC 2010

Camp Courage is a residential camping program for children, age 8 - 14, who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS,. Camp will be held from Friday, August 27 - through Sunday, August 29, 2010 in Branchport, NY. Campers can apply inline to www.campgooddays.org or call 1-800-785-2135. If anyone would like to volunteer, there will be a volunteer training on June 12, 2010, but you must sign up at the website or number above by May 7, 2010. Volunteers are need for the following positions: Camp Counselor, Nurse Practitioner or PA and a Physician to be on call during camp. For campers, you can check with the number above to find out any transportation arrangements that might be in the works.

NEXT GILEAD PHARMACY DINNER AND PRESENTATION

The dinner and HIV/AIDS related presentation will be held on Wednesday, May 19th, 5:30PM at Grande's Bella Cucina. As you are all aware by know, you must register with Bill at 607-724-0103 before May 12th so Gilead can confirm with Grande's the total amount. It is our understanding that Gilead was given a whole new updated education package for the year 2010, so we should be hearing new information. The topic this month is on ways individuals can preserve their immune systems and starting treatment early vs later. The restaurant is located at 1171 Vestal Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13903 very close to General Hospital,

INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES: Free Seminar by Rick Lavoie, M.A and M.ED:

"Fair doesn't mean giving every child the same thing, it means giving every child what they need" -Rick Lavoie. A special seminar is being presented by the Southern Tier Independence Center on June 4, 2010 from 9 AM - 3 PM. The address is 135 E. Fredrick Street, Binghamton, NY in the Helen Keller Conference Room. Among the topics to be discussed are the following:

- *The impact of social incompetence upon the daily life of children
- *The generic nature of social skill deficits
- *Helping your children develop friendships and positive peer relationships
- *Factors that enhance children's social acceptance
- *Overcome shyness and low self-esteem
- *Enjoy play dates and making friends

Call 607-724-2111 for information and registration.

Out of Prison—and Into Good Health:

To control your HIV on the outside, start planning while you're still behind the walls.

Six months before release:

- Find out whether your prison or jail has a discharge worker—a staff member who helps prisoners prepare for release. If so, that person can help with most of the things you need. If there isn't a discharge worker, ask your case manager or the chaplain. Introduce yourself and begin...
- Request help getting a Social Security card, a photo ID and medical benefits. Ask for a referral to a doctor in the community, and for help scheduling an appointment now for after release.
- If you're a veteran, find out if you qualify for any programs.
- If you have no place to live after release, ask whether you qualify for sober housing (to help people—ex-prisoners and others—stay off drugs).
- Write to the ACLU or a local AIDS service organization (ASO) for help with health care, housing or job placement (your case manager can help you find addresses). Some agencies might visit you while you're still in prison.
- Ask your prison doctor for a copy of your medical records. Follow up until you get the files; you may have to sign a release for them. Make sure the records show your HIV status and list all your meds (those you take now and any you've taken before). Your outside doctor will need all that information.
- Request a 30-day supply of your medication to take with you when you're released. This should be given to you just before you leave the institution.
- If there is an HIV peer group (or any other prisoner peer group) in your facility, ask members for tips on getting services outside.

After your release:

- Make sure you keep that first doctor's appointment after you get out. Most doctors have some kind of social service staff in their office. Ask the staff for help finding services.
- Advocate for yourself with the doctor. Describe your situation—that you would like to stay on your meds but are struggling, for example, with homelessness, trying to stay clean, or whatever issues you face. The doctor may be able to suggest a resource. At the very least, he or she should better understand how to care for you.
- Look up your local department of social services and ask what services might be available to you—then apply for them.
- If you can't find help through these channels, consider seeking a faith-based organization. People there can often point you in the direction of a social service agency if they don't have one within their organization.
- Bring a friend or family member with you to appointments (both doctor and agencies). Having someone else listen along with you can help you understand and remember what's said.
- Contact the National Hire Network, which can refer you to job placement services in your state: hirenetwork.org, 212.243.1313 or 202.544.5478.