

# HEALTH AND LAW PROJECT



## Spotlight on Dr. Bery Engebretsen

### ***The Medical Champion for Iowa Legal Aid's Health and Law Project***

**D**r. Engebretsen is the Medical Champion for the Iowa Legal Aid's Health and Law Project. He plays a crucial role in the success and development of the project by serving as a vital connection between the medical and legal fields. We are all thankful for the important work Dr. Engebretsen does on behalf of the Health and Law Project and the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association! Dr. Engebretsen can be reached at [BEengebretsen@phcinc.net](mailto:BEengebretsen@phcinc.net).

The Medical Champion's services include:

- Coordinating and facilitating Iowa Legal Aid's presence and access as appropriate to Community Health Center clinical services;
- Addressing issues of concern between the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association and Health and Law Project partners;
- Facilitating communication with and referrals to attorneys working in the Health and Law Project;
- Facilitating training opportunities; and
- Assisting with development and implementation of project evaluation.

*Dr. Engebretsen has had dual administrative and patient care responsibilities since graduating from his Family Medicine Residency in 1970 at the University of Miami. In 2004 he retired as Executive Director after 24 years with Primary Health Care, Inc. In 2005 he rejoined PHC as part-time Medical Director. This Public Health Service, Section 330, Community Health Center also provides related programs that include three major satellites, a Dental program, a Ryan White HIV program, Grand View College Student Health, and various outreach activities (such as the Homeless Program with twelve clinical sites, Chemically Affected Women's Project, and the Infant Mortality Initiative). Two days a week he provides direct patient care as a family physician. He is a founding board member of the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association, an affiliation of Community Health Centers, Migrant Programs, and both of the State Health Departments in Iowa and Nebraska. He was also President of INConcert Care, the practice management network for Iowa and Nebraska CHCs. This organization has developed a network to provide economies of scale for its members, and a centralized Medical Information System. He is also currently the director of the Center for Value in Healthcare of the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association. He is a member of the American College of Physician Executives and has received a scholarship from that organization for studies in medical management.*

# The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

***Keeping gas, electric, and telephone service is an important part of maintaining household health. The attorneys of Iowa Legal Aid's Health and Law Project are committed to assisting families threatened with utility disconnections.***

**If any of your patients face the following utility issues this winter, they should contact a Health and Law Project attorney immediately:**

1. Facing shut-off for failure to pay their deposit.
2. Facing shut-off for failure to pay their bill.
3. Patients already disconnected for failure to pay their bill who want to get utilities turned on.
4. Patients having trouble getting their utilities turned on at a new residence due to an unpaid bill.

**N**ow that the winter heating season is upon us, many families are beginning to wonder how they will be able to afford the ever rising cost of keeping warm during the long winter months. It is important that these families be made aware of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP is a federally funded block grant program providing monetary assistance to help low-income households pay the cost of heating their homes during the winter months. To be eligible for LIHEAP assistance, a household's income must be less than 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. This means a family of four may have a household income of up to \$30,950 and still be eligible for the program. It should be noted that households eligible for LIHEAP are also eligible for the LifeLine Telephone assistance program. The LifeLine program provides a monthly credit to the (landline) telephone bills of low-income households to help maintain telephone service.

LIHEAP is administered by local Community Action Programs throughout Iowa. These organizations began taking applications from families with an elderly or disabled household member on October 1. Other households became eligible to apply for assistance on November 1.

LIHEAP has limited funds to assist low-income households. Since these funds are distributed on a first come/first served basis, eligible

families should apply as soon as possible. It is important to remember, though, that the local Community Action Programs will continue to accept applications for LIHEAP through April 15, 2008. Occasionally, the federal government will make additional funds available late in the application process. Also, there are benefits to qualifying for LIHEAP, even if the program has no funds to give to the eligible family.

The winter utility disconnection moratorium runs from November 1 to April 30 of each year. During this period, a utility company cannot disconnect a family's utility service if the family is eligible for LIHEAP and the utility service in question is necessary to supply heat to the household. If a family that may be eligible for LIHEAP but hasn't yet applied for assistance receives notice that their gas or electric service is going to be disconnected, they should tell the utility company they believe they are eligible for LIHEAP. The household should then apply for LIHEAP and let their local Community Action Program know the utility company has threatened to terminate their utility service. The utility company must give the household thirty days to get an eligibility decision from their local Community Action Program before disconnecting a household's gas or electric service when that utility company has been told a household believes it is eligible for LIHEAP and intends to apply for the program.

# How is the Health and Law Project Helping?



Anne\* was referred to the Health and Law Project by River Hills Community Health Center. Anne, her husband, and her four children had resided in the same apartment building for the past twelve years. She had recently reported her landlord to the city as the result of deficiencies in the apartment building that she believed could affect the health and safety of her family. The client had recently received a notice of nonpayment of rent from her landlord, but her landlord continued to refuse to accept her rent payment. The client was willing to move out of the apartment as soon as possible, but she could not leave without time to prepare the family to move. Through the Health and Law Project, she was able to avoid eviction. The landlord ultimately accepted her rent payment and gave her time in order to prepare her family to move out of this less-than-ideal housing situation.

\* To protect client confidentiality, this is not her real name or the likeness of the family in the photograph.

## **Contacting the Iowa Legal Aid Health and Law Project:**

**Council Bluffs** (712) 328-8265 extension 1119 in Council Bluffs or 1-800-432-9229 and ask for the Health and Law Project

**Des Moines** (515) 243-1198, extension 1640

**Marshalltown** 1-800-532-1503 and ask for the Health and Law Project

**Ottumwa** 1-800-452-0007 and ask for the Health and Law Project.

**Sioux City** (712) 277-8688, extension 1119 or 1-800-352-0017 and ask for the Health and Law Project.



# Where are the Centers and what services do they provide?

**Council Bluffs**  
Council Bluffs Community Health Center

**Des Moines**  
Primary Health Care

**Ottumwa**  
River Hills Community Health Center

**Marshalltown**  
Primary Health Care

**Sioux City**  
Siouxland Community Health Center

**Council Bluffs**  
**Council Bluffs Community Health Center**  
300 W. Broadway, Suite 6  
Council Bluffs, IA, 51503  
(712) 325-1990  
Executive Director: Cecelia Creighton

*Council Bluffs Community Health Center is committed to providing affordable, accessible, cost-effective health care to those in the community by offering optimal utilization of resources.*

**SERVICES:** Homeless, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Primary Medical, Radiology

**Des Moines**  
**Primary Health Care**  
2353 SE 14th St.  
Des Moines, IA, 50320  
(515) 248-1400



**Marshalltown**  
**Primary Health Care**  
412 E. Church Street  
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158  
Executive Director: Kelly Huntsman

*Primary Health Care is a team of caring professionals providing health care and supportive services for people in Central Iowa to improve their quality of life.*

**SERVICES:** Dental, Family Practice, HIV, Healthy Start, Homeless Health Care, Internal Medicine, International Clinic, Interpretation, OB, Pediatrics, Primary Medical, Specialty Referral, Transportation

**Ottumwa**  
**River Hills Community Health Center**  
201 S. Market Str.  
Ottumwa, IA, 52501  
(641) 683-5773  
CEO: Rick Johnson



*River Hills Community Health Center is dedicated to providing quality primary health care and dental care to individuals and families in southeast Iowa, with a special emphasis on serving the underserved and uninsured populations.*

**SERVICES:** Chronic Disease Management, Dietary Counseling, Health Education, Interpretation Services, Preventive Care - all ages, Primary Medical Care

**Sioux City**  
**Siouxland Community Health Center**  
1021 Nebraska St.  
Sioux City, IA, 51102  
Toll free: 888-371-1965  
CEO: Michelle Stephan



*The mission of the Siouxland Community Health Center is to provide primary health care that eliminates access barriers and improves the health of the Siouxland community.*

**SERVICES:** Dental, Family Practice, HIV/AIDS, Immunization, Interpretation Services, Moderately-Complex Laboratory, In-house Pharmacy, Mental Health, Child Health Program, Clinical Pharmacy