From the Desk of Janine Chittenden, CSHCS Program Supervisor

Spring is nature’s way of saying, “Let’s get it started!”. The land is awakening and plants are blooming with abandon, adorning our landscape with color. Here at Children’s Special Health Care, our “landscape” is also flourishing.

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Lonnie Barnett as the new Director of the Children's Special Health Care Services Division. Lonnie has 20 years of state and local community health experience, and has been a manager at the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) since 1998. He holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and completed his undergraduate studies in Biology and Economics at Emory University, in Atlanta. I look forward to his leadership and experience to maintain the current level of excellence in serving Michigan’s children and families with special needs. We welcomed Lonnie as he visited Ottawa County in February, observing a nursing home visit with our Nurse, Laura Haiderer.

Our local CSHCS staff also has a new face! Leslie Ver Duin enthusiastically joined the nursing team in March. She is a GVSU grad with degrees in Biology and Nursing. Her nursing career has allowed her to work in orthopedics and trauma, ICU, and renal care. Her desire is to provide excellent health care and encourage optimum health potential for all people. If you live in the Grand Haven, Holland, or Zeeland area, you may be hearing from her sometime this year.

Happy Spring to all of our CSHCS families!

In This Special Kid's Corner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Corner</td>
<td>Page 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Easter Story</td>
<td>Page 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Opinion Matters</td>
<td>Page 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting CSHCS Staff</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI F2FHIEC</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Network</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Guide to CSHCS</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSHCS Policy Review</td>
<td>Pages 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Health Services Info</td>
<td>Page 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resources &amp; Support</td>
<td>Pages 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Special Kids Corner’ is written and edited by Amy Fontaine. We would love to hear from you at: afontaine@miottawa.org

FROM OUR CSHCS FAMILY TO YOURS

We are inspired and humbled by your strength, determination, resourcefulness, and most of all love that shines through the challenges of raising a child with special needs. We learn from you, we rejoice in your triumphs and we weep for your sorrows. You make a difference in our lives.

It is our honor and privilege to serve you.

Your CSHCS Team: (left to right): Amy Fontaine; Laura Haiderer; Leslie Ver Duin; Janine Chittenden; Sandy Boven (manager); Mary Cushman; Brenda Kempf.
PARENT'S CORNER:
OUR FIRST EASTER

With springtime in the air, I am reminded of my first Easter as a new mom. I had just brought Emily home from the NICU to join her sister Jolie. She was a very tiny 3 pounds 6 ounces, while Jolie was up to a ‘chunky’ five pounds. Sam was still in the NICU struggling with a shunt infection. Life was a rollercoaster of sleepless nights, numbing stress, and such fragile hope. It was late at night, and with two very tiny, wide awake babies looking at me, I decided to read them their very first story. I propped them up on a pillow and reached for an Easter story from the top of a stack of books brought by a dear friend earlier in the day.

As I began to read, I was amazed to recognize the treasured story from my childhood, the story that my grandmother told and retold as I climbed into her lap during every precious visit. It was the story of the Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes. As I read, tears ran down my face as I felt the tender love of a parent for a child, the love of a grandparent being passed down to a new generation, and the strength and compassion of caring for a sick child.

This story has become part of the fabric of my life. I believe the magical tale holds the ingredients for a good and happy life. The lessons are simple and many: the joy of doing good things for others; the satisfaction of doing a job well done; the relief given by helping where you are needed; the abundance of love in a happy home; the preciousness of a child, and compassion for one who is sick; the virtue in trying your best; and the reward in never giving up when things get difficult. These lessons shaped the little girl who was loved so much, and the mother I strive to be for Emily, Jolie and Sam.

So, a thank you to my beautiful grandmother for showing me by example how to raise a family by focusing on the things that are truly important. She is so like the Little Country Bunny in that she isn’t fancy or vain, she lives simply and loves much. She has taught her children to work hard and to love with caring and compassion. She helped each of her children find their own strengths and made them each feel special—just like the littlest bunny who was so kind that he was chosen to pull out his mother’s chair every evening. She adores her children and her family, and love has always been the foundation of her home.

Wishing each of you a spring full of hope and renewal, but mostly love.

Amy

CSHCS WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU
Your Opinion Matters

We continue to strive for excellence in serving our clients and families, and we embrace your feedback about how we are doing. If you have any comments, suggestions, criticisms, or compliments, please contact any CSHCS staff member (see contact list on page 3), or Amy Fontaine, our CSHCS parent liaison and newsletter editor at: afontaine@miottawa.org.

If you know of a Community Resource that might benefit other CSHCS families, such as a support groups, grant opportunities, or special events, please let us know so that we may pass along the information. Likewise, if you have a topic or idea that you would like to see in a future edition of our ‘Special Kid’s Corner’ newsletter, please contact Amy Fontaine at: afontaine@miottawa.org.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS?

CSHCS uses e-mail to keep our families updated about changes in CSHCS policy and upcoming community events. E-mail also allows families to ask questions, discuss issues, and to request forms and information. Imagine... no more phone tag, saving trees, and more money to help our CSHCS families.

Please update your e-mail address with CSHCS today at: bkempf@miottawa.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CSHCS Staff Contact List</strong></th>
<th><strong>Helpful CSHCS Contact Information</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Mary Cushman**, CSHCS Representative  
Phone 616 844-2366  
Fax 616 846-1270  
E-mail mcushman@miottawa.org | **The CSHCS Family Center**  
Send an e-mail to:  
fccyshcn@michigan.gov  
or call:  
The CSHCS Family Phone Line  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday -- Friday  
1-800-359-3722  
Family Support Network  
The parent-to-parent support arm of the  
CSHCS Family Center  
1-800-359-3722  
CSHCS Online payment site:  
| **Laura Haiderer**, CSHCS Nurse  
Phone 616 844-2488  
Fax 616 846-1270  
E-mail lhaiderer@miottawa.org | **Family-to-Family Health Information & Education Center**  
**(F2FHIEC)**  
www.briges4kids.org/fc  
1-800-359-3722  
**F2FHIEC Parent & Professional Training Schedule:**  
http://www.bridges4kids.org/f2f/training.htm  
**The Children with Special Needs Fund**  
Online applications available at:  
www.michigan.gov/csnfund  
1-517-241-7420  
For help with the application,  
call your local CSHCS office,  
or the CSHCS Family Center Phone Line |
| **Leslie Ver Duin**, CSHCS Nurse  
Phone 616 844-2977  
Fax 616 846-1270  
E-mail lverduin@miottawa.org | **Contact Mary for:** Annual Renewals; Adding Providers; Financial Concerns such as billing issues and significant income changes; Travel/lodging requests; and to schedule an appointment with your CSHCS nurse.  
**Contact Laura if you live in areas other than Grand Haven, Holland, or Zeeland** and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.  
**Contact Leslie if you live in Grand Haven, Holland, or Zeeland** and have questions or issues regarding: Coverage; Medical Information; Plans of Care; and Adding New Medical Diagnosis.  
**Contact Brenda for** changes in name, address, phone, e-mail, and insurance information, or to schedule an appointment with your CSHCS nurse.  
**Contact Janine for** help with problems or questions that have not been able to be answered by other staff members. |
| **Brenda Kempf**, Support Staff  
Phone 616 844-2155  
Fax 616 844-1778  
E-mail bkempf@miottawa.org | **The CSHCS Family Phone Line**  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday -- Friday  
1-800-359-3722 |
| **Janine Chittenden**, CSHCS Supervisor  
Phone 616 844-2399  
Fax 616 844-1778  
E-mail jchittenden@miottawa.org | **Family Support Network**  
The parent-to-parent support arm of the  
CSHCS Family Center  
1-800-359-3722 |

Although all staff members can assist you with any question or need, specialty areas are listed here:
Michigan Family-to-Family Health Information & Education Center (F2FHIEC)

Operating within the CSHCS Family Center, the goal of the F2FHIEC is to improve access to quality care and supports for children who have chronic or complex healthcare needs. By partnering with other state agencies and organizations, they seek to empower families through information, education, and family-to-family support.

The F2FHIEC provides:

**Family-to-Family support** by matching you to other families who understand the issues you face, and who can provide assistance that allows you to make your own informed decisions.

**Referral Services** to organizations that offer services for your child and family including:
- Community Mental Health Agencies
- Disability Rights Services
- Early Intervention/Special Education Services
- Prescription Assistance Programs
- Public Health Insurance Programs
- Transition Resources and More!

**A Lending Library for families** with many books, videos, and resources on disability specific information and medical related topics.

**Free workshops and trainings** on a variety of topics, including:
- Planning for Your Child’s Health & Education
- Transition Planning
- Michigan Fatherhood Annual Conference
- Annual Play Therapy Conference

**A Website offering information, and links to:**
- Health Care Coverage and Insurance
- Health/Disability Specific Organizations
- Local and State Agencies
- Newsletters, Bulletins and Listservs
- Support Groups and much more!

Visit: www.briges4kids.org/f2f

“Family Linkages” newsletter—connecting families of children and youth with special needs in Michigan with information, education and support. Family Linkages is full of information from it’s many partners, including the CSHCS Family Center.

Note: The CSHCS Family Center Heart-to-Heart newsletter will be discontinued after June 2012. If you received this newsletter electronically, then you will automatically receive Family Linkages.

To subscribe to Family Linkages, send an e-mail request to: rigatod@michigan.gov

To contact the F2FHIEC call: 1 800 359-3722
Or e-mail the CSHCS Family Center: fccyshcn@michigan.gov

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**Family Support Network of Michigan**

The Family Support Network of Michigan (FSN) is CSHCS’s parent-to-parent support arm. The goal of the FSN is to bring families together for information and emotional support by providing:
- Parent support groups.
- One-to-one support by trained parent volunteers.
- Information about programs for siblings, parents, and grandparents.
- Family social events.
- Information about local, state, and national resources.

FSN services are FREE and confidential to any family with a special needs child, regardless of CSHCS enrollment. To contact the FSN, call the CSHCS Family Phone Line at:

1 800 359-3722

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**Family Guide to Children’s Special Health Care Services**

Published by the CSHCS Family Center in April of 2010, the Family Guide provides complete information about CSHCS and how to navigate the CSHCS system. You’ll find answers to frequently asked questions, tools for managing your child’s healthcare information, and more! The Family Guide is posted under the Family Center section of the MDCH website: www.michigan.gov/mdch

We have also posted a link on our Ottawa County CSHCS website. Go to: www.miottawa.org/health
Children’s Health Services
Provided by the Ottawa County Health Department

Free Pre-Kindergarten Hearing & Vision Screenings
Vision and hearing screening is required prior to kindergarten entrance by the Michigan Public Health Code. Proof of these tests must be taken to the school your child will be attending. The health department offers the required hearing and vision screenings at various times and locations to meet your needs. More information is available at miOttawa.org/health. Screenings are provided free of charge by appointment.

Free or Low Cost Back to School Immunizations
Whether your children are entering pre-school, college or somewhere in between, the Ottawa County Health Department may be able to help you meet your vaccine needs. The health department offers immunizations, by appointment, at a reduced cost to your children less than 19 years of age if they meet one of the following criteria: are Medicaid eligible, have no health insurance, have insurance which does not include ANY reimbursement for the cost of the vaccine, or are American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Free Dental Services for Children
The Miles of Smiles mobile unit is a dental office on wheels. Services are available for qualifying uninsured and Medicaid and MIChild insured children less than 19 years old. Miles of Smiles provides services at schools, Head Start Centers, health department offices and other sites. Call to learn more and to schedule an appointment. You can also print an application at miOttawa.org/health.

Free or Low Cost Health Care Coverage
If your child is under the age of 19 and qualifies financially, you could benefit from low or no cost medical coverage. Coverage is also available for qualifying pregnant women. Our eligibility specialist will walk with you through the enrollment process. If you are eligible, you may even leave with instant coverage!

Children’s Special Health Care Services
Caring for Kids with Chronic Conditions! If your child often needs a physician or a specialist, has expensive prescription needs and has a chronic health condition, your child may qualify for help. More than 2,600 medical diagnoses are currently covered. Call to find out if your child qualifies.

Prenatal & Infant Health Services
We offer support while you are pregnant, and help you with your baby's growth and development. Our goal is for you to have a healthy baby! Call to learn more about the Maternal and Infant Health Program.

Call Today to schedule an appointment for immunizations, hearing or vision screening:
Holland.................616-396-5266
Grand Haven........616-846-8360
Hudsonville.........616-669-0040

To learn about free or low cost health care coverage, call 616-393-5731
To learn about free dental services for qualifying children, call 1-800-467-5905
To learn about health services for children with chronic conditions, call 616-844-2366 or 1-800-359-3722.
To learn about prenatal and infant health services, call 616-393-5758
Find additional information at www.miOttawa.org/health
Reviewing Your CSHCS Client Eligibility Notice

CSHCS Annual Renewal is a great time to review your Client Eligibility Notice to make sure that all your providers are listed. Your Client Eligibility Notice functions like an insurance card and needs to be shown at the time of your appointment. All providers, with the exception of Durable Medical Providers and Pharmacies, must be listed in order to receive payment from CSHCS.

If you need to add a new provider to your child’s coverage, contact your local CSHCS office, and provide the following information: Your child’s name, date of birth, and CSHCS ID#; the first and last name of the new provider; and the beginning date of coverage. An updated Client Eligibility Notice listing the new provider will be sent to you.

Have you noticed a change to your Client Eligibility Notice? Medical consultants at the Lansing CSHCS office periodically review the medical services being received by clients. This review may have resulted in the change to your Client Eligibility Notice if a service is deemed no longer necessary for treatment, or as not relevant to the CSHCS covered condition. A change might also indicate that your child’s condition no longer meets the severity criteria established by CSHCS, or it may reflect a change in your child’s diagnosis.

If you have questions or changes, call your local CSHCS office at: 616 844-2366. You may also call the CSHCS Family Phone Line at 1-800-359-3722 for assistance, or to learn about the CSHCS appeals process.
CSHCS is pleased to announce that comprehensive health coverage is now available through a new insurance program. For some CSHCS enrollees, the State of Michigan will even absorb the cost!

The Health Insurance Program (HIP) of Michigan provides comprehensive coverage, beyond what CSHCS covers, such as primary care, acute care, and emergency care. The HIP plan, which is administered by Physicians Health Plan, was created through the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) for people who have been unable to get insurance due to a pre-existing health condition.

In a recent mailing to more than 200 CSHCS enrollees, the state encouraged voluntary HIP enrollment for anyone age 18 or over, who is covered by CSHCS for Cystic Fibrosis or four of the five Hemophilia codes, and who is not covered by any other type of insurance, including Medicaid or Medicare. In the future, HIP enrollment will become mandatory for these CSHCS enrollees. You need not wait as the benefits are available now!

For CSHCS enrollees with a diagnosis not listed above, CSHCS may also pay HIP premiums if it is determined to be cost effective for the State to do so. These CSHCS clients will need to have an individual cost effectiveness determination completed by the CSHCS program.

If you did not receive a letter with enrollment information, keep in mind that HIP enrollment is open to any Michigan citizen who is unable to obtain health insurance due to a pre-existing condition.

Benefits of HIP Michigan include many, if not all, of the same benefits of private health insurance plans:

- Preventative health services
- Prescription drug coverage
- Care in medical offices
- Emergency services
- Inpatient and outpatient hospital services
- Coverage for pregnancy
- Diabetes treatment, equipment, and supplies
- Home health care, skilled nursing and Hospice care
- Outpatient rehabilitative services
- Behavioral health services

If you are wondering if HIP enrollment can help you, or if you have any questions, call your local CSHCS office at: 616 844-2366, or call the Family Phone Line at: 1 800 359-3722.

Your CSHCS Plan of Care Document

Following your annual CSHCS nurse visit, you will receive a written summary called a Plan of Care.

Your Plan of Care document will contain:
- Your child’s health history
- A list of your child’s doctors and providers, (including addresses and phone numbers)
- Goals for your child’s health and your family’s well-being
- An action list for both you and your nurse

Your CSHCS Plan of Care can help you:
- Manage your child’s healthcare
- Organize large amounts of information
- Plan for the future
- Track yearly progress

Useful Tip: Take your CSHCS Plan of Care along to Dr. visits as a handy reference.

A Reminder: If your annual CSHCS nurse visit was done over the telephone, please sign and return the signature page of your Plan of Care.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided for this purpose. Thank you for your cooperation!
Allendale Community Park
Makes Fun for Everyone!

Wonderful things have been happening at Allendale Community Park’s Accessible Playground! During the last year, a team effort has made the playground accessible to all children. The goal is to allow children of all abilities the opportunity to play together side-by-side.

This wonderfully accessible playground includes: a latched reclining safety swing; an extra-wide bouncy car for two, that provides neck support; an all access play structure; drums and shakers that make strong vibrations for children with hearing or sensory issues; and a raised sandbox that can accommodate a wheelchair.

There is also a small splash-pad that is wheelchair/stroller accessible, with a larger splash-pad addition planned for late summer 2012. Extensive fencing for safety, benches for resting, additional equipment, and some really cool art work from last year’s Art Prize will soon be installed!

Please join us at the park for our Summer Park Parties (see above). The Allendale Community Park’s Accessible Playground is located at 6676 Lake Michigan Drive, behind the township hall.

CSHCS PARK PARTIES
Summer 2012
Please join us at the

Allendale Community Park’s Accessible Playground
for games, prizes, crafts, music,
fellowship with other CSHCS families
and FUN, FUN, FUN!!!!!!

Tuesday June 19  10—12 a.m.
Tuesday August 21  2—4 p.m.

For more information, e-mail: afontaine@miottawa.org

This event was made possible in part by a grant from the Allendale Community Foundation.

1) Funded by USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through State of Michigan. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. For food help, contact the toll free Michigan Food Assistance Program Hotline: (855) ASK-MICH.
2) The park equipment was provided in part by the Building Healthy Communities Grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health.
Special Olympics of West Michigan

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults, ages 8 through 108, with intellectual disabilities.

Athletes are given continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness and athletic skill, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympic athletes, and the community.

Jennifer Johnson, mother of Jordan, a Special Olympian, said that he competed in the 50 yard dash and won a gold medal. “He was the only child in the race with leg braces and a walker. I was so proud and he was so excited.” Jennifer also said, “Every child who participates gets some type of acknowledgement, which I think is awesome since they are all winners!” She and Jordan had a wonderful experience and can’t wait to participate in Special Olympics again this year.

Sports offered in Area 12 (Ottawa and Allegan Counties) include:

- Alpine Skiing
- Aquatics
- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Bowling
- Cross Country Skiing
- Gymnastics
- Horseshoes
- Poly Hockey
- Snowshoeing
- Soccer
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Weightlifting

To learn more about Special Olympics, or to get involved, find them on the web at: **SOMI.org**

To receive an ‘Athlete Welcome Packet’ containing information on Special Olympics, Area 12 sports schedules and coaches, and a health appraisal form, send an e-mail request to Mark Dalman, Area 12 Director, at: **mdalman@chartermi.net**

Visit the Holland Farmers’ Market as a Family!

One great way to encourage your kids to try fruits and vegetables is to visit your local farmers’ market. Farmers’ markets offer garden-fresh produce with a taste that kids are sure to enjoy.

This year, the Holland Farmers’ Market will begin accepting Bridge (EBT) Cards! If you would like to use your Bridge Card to shop at the market, visit the EBT booth located inside the Civic Center on days that the market is open.

The market is located outside the Holland Civic Center, at 150 W. 8th Street in Holland. The market will be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 am-4 pm, May 16 through November 24; then on Saturdays only until December 8.

Whole Family Connection

On the Web at: **wholefamilyottawa.com**

Whole Family Connection, serving Ottawa County, is an interactive web-based program that helps you identify what you need for your family, and then links you to available services. Whole Family Connection is free, easy, and completely private.

Whole Family Connection gives families access to:
- Health care
- Special Needs Programs
- Safety Programs
- Pre-natal Care
- Child Care/Preschool
- Substance Abuse
- School Activities
- School Preparation
- Parent Education
- Insurance
- Faith-Based Programs
- And More!

*Whole family connection is brought to you by a collaboration of many local agencies. It is headed up by the Great Start Collaborative of Ottawa County and Pathways MI.*

Visit the Holland Farmers’ Market as a Family!

An on-line resource for families of children and teens with special needs. **www.bravekids.org**

Brave Kids, is a United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) initiative, serving children and youth with disabilities and chronic/life-threatening illnesses. They provide a support community, and information and resources on numerous medical conditions like genetic diseases, autism, cancer, cerebral palsy, etc.

You’ll find a special section called ‘Just for Kids’ to help young people access information that helps them lead a life without limits, giving tips and tools about growing up in today’s world.

You can sign up for the ‘Brave Kids’ monthly newsletter. Just click on the ‘Community’ heading.

Visit the Holland Farmers’ Market as a Family!

The market also offers a chef series, kids’ activities, and special events throughout the season.

For more information, visit: **www.hollandfarmersmarket.com,** or call: **616 355-1138.**

Come and experience the market with your family!
CALLING ALL PRESCHOOLERS

Is your child headed to preschool or kindergarten this fall? If so, help them to be ready to learn by having their hearing and vision screened. The State of Michigan requires all children to have a vision and hearing screen prior to entering Kindergarten. Free hearing and vision screening is available by appointment at the Ottawa County Health Department.

Don’t delay, Call today!

Holland: 616-396-5266
Grand Haven: 616-846-8360
Hudsonville: 616-669-0040

Family Hope Foundation (FHF) invests in children with special needs through family support, engaging community experts, advocacy through collaboration, and financial assistance to provide access to therapies.

FHF strives to fill gaps in the system for families of individuals with special needs and to work collaboratively with other community organizations to strengthen family supports and services.

They are excited to be expanding their Family Fun Events this year to provide families of individuals with special needs with affordable, disability-friendly, low stress, fun activities that they can participate in as a whole family! See more on the web at: www.thefamilyhopefoundation.org

Register Today for the free Challenge of Children Conference!

Thursday, May 17  8 am - 3 pm
Hope College Campus  Holland, MI

Challenge of Children is a free, one day conference held each year in May. The conference is dedicated to informing, educating, motivating, and offering support and networking on child development, child guidance, and other issues related to parenting and caregiving.

The Keynote Address, presented by Bob Lancer, is entitled "Raising Ourselves, Raising Our Children". Choose from over 42 sessions with great topics including:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Community Resources
- Children’s Literature, Toddlers
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Adoption
- Nutrition
- School
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Teens
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Domestic Violence
- Love and Logic
- Discipline
- Media
- Legal Planning for a Child with Disabilities
- And Lot’s More!

Registration is required at: www.challengeofchildren.org
Registration Deadline: May 10, 2012

*Professional Development and Contact Hours available (see website for details).
*Child care is not provided.
*Optional buffet lunch is available. Non-refundable payment of $11 is due at registration. Registrations made together will be assigned the same lunch period.

Note: While the conference is coordinated by health, education and human service agencies of Ottawa, Muskegon and Allegan Counties, the event is available to anyone.