

Medicaid Matters

Helping seniors and their families make informed decisions about long term care.

November 2009

Medicaid Tip: *The Community Spouse Asset* Allowance (CSAA) is currently \$109,560.00, and the Community Spouse [monthly] Maintenance Needs Allowance (CSMNA) is \$2,739.00/month (effective: 1/1/2009). The figures for the upcoming year are often announced in Oct/Nov; however, since there is no increase in the Cost of Living Assessment (COLA) for 2010, it is possible that the CSAA and CSMNA will remain at the current level for 2010.*

**In addition to the CSAA, other assets may be exempt such as the family home, a car, an irrevocable prepaid funeral, certain Medicaid approved annuities, and certain types of Trusts (OBRA "payback" trusts).*

Upcoming Seminars:

Governor's Conference on Aging – December 9-11, 2009 - Medicaid Matters will present **Good News/Bad News** – an overview of the components of a long term plan (Legal documents, Medicare, Long Term Care Insurance, Reverse Mortgage, Medicaid Planning, In-Home Care, Adult Day Service, etc.), using a story about Carol and Sam (a fictional married couple) to illustrate how they put together a plan to allow Carol to receive care in her home, and postpone the need for a nursing home. (9/11/09 @ 10:45 a.m. @ the Marriott Chicago Downtown - 540 N. Michigan Ave.)

Medicaid Planning for the Middle Class:

The Community Spouse Asset* Allowance ("CSAA") was originally designed to keep married couples from becoming impoverished due costs for one spouse's care in a nursing home, and costs necessary to support the other spouse, who continued to reside at home ("Community Spouse"). Sometimes the government gets it right: rather than end up with two people needing government support, the CSAA helps the married couple by allowing a transfer of assets to the Community Spouse, so that the spouse residing in a nursing home can have care covered by Medicaid. In some cases the CSAA standard can be increased if a married couple's monthly income* is less than the Community Spouse Maintenance Needs Allowance ("CSMNA"), or through a court order.

Many people are not aware that the CSAA is not just for nursing homes any more. The CSAA is also used to allow adults 60 years of age and older to receive subsidized care while still living in their own homes through the Illinois Department on Aging Community Care Program. In the past several weeks, Medicaid Matters has assisted several families who, unaware of the Community Care Program, have in fact depleted their assets far below the CSAA standard by hiring private caregivers to provide care in the home. Medicaid Matters wonders and worries about how the community spouse will be able to support him or herself in the future.

Middle Class families need to be made aware that **Medicaid Planning** can allow families to keep frail seniors in their homes by **protecting assets**, so that they can be used to pay for **additional** care in coordination with the care provided through the Community Care Program ("CCP").

*Definitions: an asset is something of value, such as the balance of your bank accounts; income is money you receive periodically such as Social Security, annuity payments, interest, and dividends.