

The *Breathe easy* is just heating up! at home program

Volume 5, Issue 4

Fall/Winter
2012/2013

Special points of interest:

- Dion Irish promotion
- Massachusetts resident heating requirements
- Fuel assistance & weatherization resources
- Commonwealth Care Smoking Cessation Coverage

Inside this issue:

Congratulations to Dion Irish	1
MA Heating Requirements	1
Commonwealth Care	2
Fuel Assistance Resources	2

Congratulations to Dion Irish!

Please join us in congratulating Dion Irish, one of Breathe Easy at Home's founders on his recent promotion! Dion has served as Assistant Commissioner for Housing for Boston's Inspectional Services Department for the past 11 years and has been named Executive Director of Boston's Fair Housing Commission.

Others of our partners would also like to recognize Dion's leadership and contributions to the program.

From Dr. Megan Sandel at Boston Medical Center: Dion Irish's leadership from ISD in the development and institutionalization of Breathe Easy At Home

(BEAH) program was phenomenal. Without him, I am not sure BEAH would have been possible.

From Susan Sommer at Children's Hospital Boston:

Dion has been a leader in making the connection between housing and health and, thus, improving housing conditions for countless children with asthma through the Breathe Easy at Home program. His calm and thoughtful demeanor and his ability to work with all sectors of the community--property owners and managers, community advocates, public health and health care professionals-- is an example for all of us of how we can get so much more

done together than in our separate silos. Thank you, Dion. We'll miss you!

From all of us at the Boston Public Health Commission:

Dion represents the best in public service! He is the first one in in the morning and the last one out at night and we are confident that he will bring that passion to City Hall. Congratulations!



Massachusetts Heating Requirements

In accordance with the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code residential dwellings must be provided with heat **from September 15th until June 15th each year.** Heating systems must be capable of providing heat that meets a **minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 64 degrees Fahrenheit from 11:01 p.m. to 6:59 a.m.**

• In the event tenants find themselves experiencing a problem with their heat they should

1. Make sure your heating system is ON.

2. Check the thermostat and make sure it is on.
3. Check make sure you have oil in your tank
4. Ensure that your gas service has not been shut off.

• If the problem persists tenants should contact the property owner/manager to remedy the problem.

If the owner/manager is unresponsive, occupants should call the Inspectional Services Department, Housing Inspection Division at **617-635-5322** or

Mayor Menino's 24-hour Hot-line at **617-635-4500**.

24 HOUR "NO HEAT" RESPONSE TEAM:

When temperatures are below 45 degrees, Mayor Menino's Cold Weather Response Team will be on call 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. This team from Boston Inspectional Services Department. **The Mayor's hotline number is (617) 635-4500.**

For more information, see the Mayor's Heating page: www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing/pdfs/winter.pdf





Residential dwellings must be provided with heat from September 15th until June 15th each year. Heating systems must be capable of providing heat that meets a minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 64 degrees Fahrenheit from 11:01 p.m. to 6:59 a.m.



Commonwealth Care Now Covers Smoking Cessation Programs

FROM BOSTON STATE HOUSE: Smokers looking to kick the habit that purchase health coverage through Commonwealth Care will now have smoking cessation programs paid for by their health insurance plan.

Commonwealth Care, the state's subsidized health insurance option for lower-income residents, began offering smoking cessation programs and drugs as a benefit on July 1, and plans to begin marketing it to customers this fall, according to a spokesman.

The new benefit comes online as lawmakers have begun pushing forward legislation that would mandate Commonwealth Care cover the costs of smoking cessation programs, including

nicotine replacement, prescription medications, and other "evidence-based pharmacologic aids to quit smoking," and counseling by a physician, certified tobacco use cessation counselor or other qualified clinician.

Commonwealth Care will replicate smoking cessation coverage already offered to MassHealth recipients. Since MassHealth started covering smoking cessation programs smoking rates among recipients dropped 26 percent within a two year period. Approximately 75,000 MassHealth members used some type of smoking cessation tool. Cases of heart attacks and strokes among MassHealth recipients also

dropped significantly by an estimated 46 percent, Moore said.

Stephen Shestakofsky, executive director of Tobacco Free Massachusetts, said most smokers are unable to quit on their own without any help. A recent Centers for Disease Control report stated two-thirds of all smokers desire to quit, Shestakofsky said. "If we can help people who want to quit by giving them the resources to do it, it becomes a win for everyone," Shestakofsky said.

Fuel Assistance Resources

Consider energy efficiency programs funded by gas and electric rate payers and offered through public utilities. Go to www.masssave.com or call (866) 527-SAVE. Free energy audits and incentives for insulation, Energy Star lighting, appliances and heating systems are among the services that may be offered.

LIHEAP Fuel Assistance Program: Beginning November 1st, homeowners and tenants can apply for fuel assistance based on income eligibility through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP"). Fuel assistance provides payments to energy providers to defer some of the costs of monthly heating bills. Call (800) 632-8175 or visit www.winterheating.com for more information.

Salvation Army Good Neighbor Fund: To apply or learn about eligibility, call (800) 262-1320, (617) 542-5420 or visit www.magoodneighbor.org.

Oil Co-ops: They are buying groups formed to help consumers purchase energy at lower costs. A list of oil co-ops in the state is available at www.mass.gov/doer as part of the fuel assistance tip sheet or you may contact DOER at (800) 351-0077.

Shop Around: If you heat by oil you should avoid letting the tank go below ¼ full, and you should contact at least 3 oil dealers to obtain the best price. Some oil dealers will allow you to lock in at a low price provided that you meet their requirements.

Gas/Electricity Discount Rates: Income eligible applicants may take advantage of discounted rates and protection against service termination. Look into arranging winter payment plans with gas and electric utilities.

Citizens Energy Oil Assistance Program <http://www.citizensenergy.com/main/Home.html> to apply to the Citizens Energy Oil Heat Program, please call 1-877-JOE-4-OIL (1-877-563-4645).

For ABCD Neighborhood service centers, visit: <http://www.bostonabcd.org/service-centers.aspx>