



The Digest

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Agencies File Suit Against State for Payment of Services Rendered

No Other Alternatives

Pay Now Illinois, a coalition of 81 Illinois-based human and social service agencies and companies, have filed suit against Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner and the directors of six statewide agencies. The suit is not filed against Rauner and the agency directors personally, but in their official capacities. The suit was filed May 4, 2016, in Cook County Court.

The suit seeks payment in full of more than \$100 million owed for work performed under contracts that date back to July 1, 2015, the beginning of the state's previous fiscal year.

The suit charges that the Governor and other state officials have acted illegally by failing to make payments on contracts while continuing to enforce them. The suit also claims that the Governor's veto of certain appropriation bills on June 25, 2015, was an unlawful impairment, or interference, with the agencies' constitutional right to a legal remedy for the non-payment of these contracts. State agencies signed contracts with the social services providers, in some cases even after the Governor's veto of the budget.

The coalition members, who provide a wide variety of services face acute financial hardship. Many have reduced staff and programs, and the viability of some of the organizations is threatened.

"This suit is about upholding a contract and paying your bills, basic good business practices," said **Andrea Durbin**, of Pay Now Illinois. "We have delivered services under binding contracts, and now the state needs to pay us. We have delivered – and we continue to deliver – essential services to Illinois' most vulnerable population of men, women, and children as required under our contracts with the state. We are doing our part. We expect the state to do the same," adds Durbin.

In addition to Governor Rauner, other defendants in the suit include: **John Baldwin**, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections; **Jean Bohnhoff**, Director of the Illinois

Department of Aging; **James Dimas**, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services; **Michael Hoffman**, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services; **Felicia**

Norwood, Director of the Department of Health and Family Services; and, **Nirav Shah**, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

In a detailed timeline of activities surrounding the Illinois budget approval process, the suit makes the case that funds were appropriated to pay the contracts, but the Governor's action to veto appropriation bills blocked payment to service providers who had signed

contracts.

"The Governor vetoed appropriation bills, and then his Administration entered into contracts for those same services," said Durbin, who is also chief executive officer of Illinois Collaboration on Youth (ICOY), a statewide network of organizations providing services to at-risk youth and their families.

"The state agencies have enforced these contracts, and have never suggested suspending or terminating them. They can't simultaneously have us enter into a contract and perform services and then say there isn't money to pay for them. The state has been having its cake and eating it too. That is just not good business," says Durbin.

The lawsuit will continue despite the recent passage of a temporary state budget by the legislature which was signed by the Governor. That's because the temporary budget only funds roughly 65% of the amount owed to social services agencies from the previous fiscal year, and funds about the same percentage for the six months of the current fiscal year the stopgap budget covers. The new Fiscal Year 2017, budget period began July 1, 2016. Illinois is the only state in the nation that does not have a full year budget passed for fiscal year 2017.

For more information, please visit www.paynowillinois.org.



Budget Impacts

By Patrick Phelan
Sinnissippi President/CEO

Sinnissippi Centers is still here and we will continue to be here for a very long time. That may seem obvious, but we have heard a few rumors to the contrary as the state budget crisis has continued without a complete resolution in sight.



It's understandable. Agencies have closed across the state. Individuals and families have been affected by this budget crisis. However, Sinnissippi Centers has weathered every storm over our fifty year history, and we will continue to do so for another fifty years.

That's not to say there haven't been impacts from this year's budget fiasco. Psychiatric services have been reduced, we have had to be very conservative in our approach to new initiatives, and neither our staff nor our clients have seen the benefits we would like to provide.

Not all of the changes we have enacted have made the front page of the newspaper, however. In fact you are experiencing one of those changes right now. This newsletter was sent exclusively by e-mail, incurring no printing costs.

Sending newsletters electronically allows us to preserve valuable resources to go toward critical needs. It is a small measure, but one of many measures we have taken to reduce costs in order to continue operating.

Another measure we took, and not lightly I might add, was to join the lawsuit detailed in the story at left. We strongly believe in the merits of the case and we felt that we were only doing what any responsible business would do...ask to be fully paid for services rendered. We believed that without this lawsuit we might never be paid over \$1.2 million dollars owed to the agency for services provided to the State of Illinois. The impact of non-payment would be devastating.

Despite the recent passage of a stopgap budget, human services agencies, like Sinnissippi Centers, are far from being fully funded for both the previous and

Impacts continued on page 2

"Together creating the highest level of care, empowering people of all ages to find joy and hope."

Respect ✧ Integrity ✧ Compassion ✧ Humor ✧ Collaboration ✧ Acceptance ✧ Quality



SINNISSIPPI CENTERS

Impacts continued from page 1

current fiscal years. We continue to hope that through federal, state, and local initiatives community behavioral health services will once again become a priority. Over the years we have seen so many funding streams erode. The current shortfall of payment could still mean the end of many quality agencies across the state. Although Sinnissippi Centers perseveres, we are not able to provide services in the way we know to be best, only the way that we can afford. Our clients, our staff, and our communities deserve better.

So, until such time as there is a recognition that those we serve deserve a chance at recovery and to be treated as valuable citizens, and until such time as our funders really comprehend the cost savings potential of the wellness we can provide, we will continue to do the very best we can with the resources we have to care for those in need.

Sinnissippi News

Patient Centered Care Is The Goal

The Ways to Wellness & Recovery Program is available to Sinnissippi Centers' clients age 18 and over who are suffering from chronic illnesses such as Bipolar Disorder, substance use issues, hypertension, and heart disease. The purpose of the program is building on existing linkages, closer sharing of health information, better identification of behavioral and physical health needs, and improving patient-centered care. The program is currently available in Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. Ways to Wellness is overseen by Associate Director of Adult Services Alisa Wolf. For more information please contact Ways to Wellness & Recovery Supervisor **Anna Hendrix** or one of the WWR staff, which includes **Amy Cline** and **Anita Meltzer**.

Project LEAD

Sinnissippi's dedication to collaboration and whole body wellness is especially important for our youth who may not understand the negative impacts that drugs and alcohol have on their development. Sinnissippi collaborates with other organizations, such as Project LEAD (Leaders Encouraging Abstinence from Drugs), so that youth have the opportunity to obtain the support they need to achieve their goals. Project LEAD of Ogle County is a group of community members that support prevention strategies to promote youth abstinence from mind-altering substances. Their mission is to create a safer, healthier community by reducing substance use through empowering youth and families.

Sinnissippi Centers Turns 50

Happy Birthday

Sinnissippi Centers celebrated an important milestone on May 31, 2016. We had our "50th birthday". It was on May 31, 1966, that Sinnissippi Mental Health Center (*our original name*) was incorporated.

"It's hard not to look back and reflect on all that has taken place in order to get to where we are today, and to compare then and now," says **Patrick Phelan**, President/CEO of Sinnissippi Centers. "We are proud of our history and traditions and we look forward to the next fifty years," adds Phelan.

"We are also looking forward to our **50th Anniversary Celebration on Thursday, October 13, 2016**. It will be held at **Sauk Valley Community College**, and the general public is welcome to attend.

Tickets are available for purchase by calling Sinnissippi Centers at 815-284-6611 or online at www.sinnissippi.org. Click on the 50th Anniversary Event on the home page, or you can [click here](#) to go directly to the event page.

Sinnissippi has produced an e-booklet commemorating our 50th anniversary year, which is also part of the event page, view it by [clicking here](#).

"The last fifty years has seen tremendous growth and changes in the community behavioral health system," says Phelan. "There have been significant advances in treatment and medications. Ours is becoming a more exact science. Many exciting new programming options have evolved over time," adds Phelan.

"Sinnissippi Centers has always maintained an innovative edge that has allowed us to set trends in emerging areas of behavioral health. Over the past fifty years, we have expanded services to cover the full life span, and the full range of mental health and substance abuse needs. We have developed a true system of care for all children, and made great advancements in working with our primary care, law enforcement, and education partners. Sinnissippi has made revolutionary advancements in the treatment of addictions and the provision of medications with mid-level providers," says Phelan. "We look forward to the next fifty years with great enthusiasm and anticipation."

How Grows The Garden?

Summer is well underway, as is the Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden Project. The project, led by Intact Program Supervisor **Gretchen Wing Howe** and Child & Adolescent Clinician **Shannon Key** has much to look forward to.

According to Gretchen Wing Howe, "We have planted squash, peppers, two beds of tomatoes, onions, strawberries, herbs, beets, peas, green beans, cucumber, and pumpkins." She adds, "In addition, we have a volunteer that is going to be helping on Wednesday mornings in the garden."

"We are also grateful that **Carol Novak** will also be on hand to assist those who are working in the garden as she is able." Novak is the former Garden Program Supervisor who recently retired from Sinnissippi. The group also planted differently this year, hoping to maximize the amount of produce from the garden. Plants were placed in different beds, in an attempt to better understand which plants grow better in different soils, levels of sunlight, and more. This process will create a learning environment in which the different paths that can change and improve the youths' futures will be illustrated by plant growth. The youth will then be able to translate what they have learned into their own lives.

The group, as well as Sinnissippi clients, will also be selling t-shirts at Gardenstock once again this year (*see story, next page, "Gardenstock Art & Music Festival"*). Youth, clients, and staff will be on hand to sell the tie dyed items that they have created over the summer. Shannon Key explains, "Gardenstock is a culmination of all of their hard-work and effort. The garden provides skills such as experience and responsibility, but Gardenstock is a chance for them to truly understand that there is a support system in our community that cares about them and their futures."

The group anticipates a larger crowd this year and is planning accordingly, ordering more T-shirts as well as creating unique items. This year, tote bags, scarves, and other items will also be available for purchase.



A view from the corner of the Dixon office looking out onto the Dixon-Sterling Freeway, better known today as Illinois Route 2



Sinnissippi entered the computer age in 1983 with one machine. Today, it averages 150



These hand-made tie-dyed T-shirts are drying in the sun getting readied for sale at Gardenstock 2016. Youth and garden staff make over 200 of them each spring.

It's Time for the 24th Annual Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open

FORE! On the 4th of August

We will be hearing "FORE!" on the 4th of August this year as soon as the **24th Annual Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open** gets underway.

The event will take place at **Timber Creek Golf Club**, 729 Timber Creek Road in Dixon with a **12:30 p.m. tee-off** and with dinner and awards following golf. And the date:

You guessed it,
August 4, 2016.

"The Golf Open is the largest fundraising event of the year," says **Patrick Phelan**, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO. "We always have a great response, we raise a lot of funds for the Foundation, and the Golf Open is always great fun," adds Phelan.

One new feature this year is **online registration** and payment for golfers. It's easy, go to www.sinnissippi.org/golf-registration. You can register one, two, or four golfers

at a time. You will be able to pay with a credit card or your PayPal account.

"One of the great things about the Foundation Golf Open," says Phelan, "is that we have a great group of staff, board members, and other volunteers who make the event fun for the golfers. I would say it's pretty impossible not

to have fun at the open," adds Phelan.

"The format is a scramble, sometimes called best-ball, and so golfers of all abilities will enjoy the day," says Phelan.

For more information contact **Patrick Phelan** or Marketing Coordinator **Andy Jackson** at 815-284-6611. You can also go online to www.sinnissippi.org and click on the Golf



Golfers at the Sinnissippi Foundation Golf Open enjoying the day and having fun raising money for the Sinnissippi Foundation

Open link for information, for the PDF registration form for golfers, sponsors, and donors, and for the online golfer registration link.

Gardenstock Art & Music Festival

Each year since 2009, a community has gathered for a day-long celebration of music, art, fun, family, friends, community, and last, but certainly not least, tie-dye. It's the annual **Gardenstock Art & Music Festival** held on the third Saturday each August in Dixon.

This year Gardenstock will be **Saturday, August 20, 2016, from 10:00 am to 11:00 pm** on the grounds of **Distinctive Gardens, 2020 Lowell Park Road, Dixon**. The best part is, **proceeds from Gardenstock support Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden Program** (see story, previous page, *How Grows The Garden?*).

This year there will be over forty artists' booths to view and choose an item or two from to purchase. Many artists at Gardenstock give a portion of the proceeds to the Youth Garden Project.

Nine bands will play Gardenstock representing almost every genre of music from rock to blues, to folk, to country, and more. Anne Hills, from Bethlehem Pennsylvania will be the musician travelling the farthest to

get to Gardenstock. Others like the Mississippi Strangers and the Bertoletti Family Band are from the greater Chicago area. There will be local favorites too.

As always, you can come for the entire day, you can come in the morning, for example, and return in the evening, or just come catch your favorite band. It's up to you, and that is probably one of the not-so-secret "ingredients" of Gardenstock that keeps people coming back year after year, and attracts new "Gardenstockers".

Food vendors will be on site offering delicious creations, but you can bring your own too. Most people who come to Gardenstock tend to do a little of both. Ditto on the beverages. The food vendors will have some choices of nonalcoholic beverages, but you can bring any of your favorite thirst quenchers too. Don't forget to bring a chair or a blanket to sit on, and enjoy the laid back atmosphere and one of the area's favorite festivals.

Parking will change a little this year with the elimination of one of the grass lots due to safety reasons. A shuttle service will be available.

Ticket sales and tent rentals are expected to begin in mid July. For more information visit www.diggersdelight.com or call Distinctive Gardens at 815-285-0044



Gardenstock is a celebration of music, art, youth, fun, family, friends, community, and, more and more every year, tie-dye.



Favorites, *The Dirty Beet Brothers*, will return to the Gardenstock stage in 2016



Foundation News

The Little Art Event That Grew

The Expressions Art Sale & Reception

continues to be a fun and successful fund raising event for the Sinnissippi Foundation. Held in April, Expressions raised over \$18,000 this year. The "little art event" as it was sometimes referred to in its beginnings has certainly grown, and now roughly equals the annual Golf Open in terms of net proceeds. This year Expressions also raised a record amount.



You Shop, They Give

When you shop, please shop locally whenever possible because of the benefits. One benefit, you may be supporting businesses that support the Sinnissippi Foundation. But sometimes you can't get something locally and you may turn to the internet. Did you know that you can benefit charities like the Sinnissippi Foundation when you do what you are already doing; shopping online? Both Sinnissippi Centers and The Sinnissippi Foundation are registered charities with Amazon Smile. It's easy to do: Go to www.smile.amazon.com and login with your regular Amazon login information. There you will be prompted to select a charity. Search for Sinnissippi Centers or The Sinnissippi Foundation For Family and Community Service and select one of those as the charity you would like to benefit. **It costs you nothing extra**, Amazon already donates a portion (.5%) of your purchase to the charities of their choice, but when you choose the charity you want to benefit, it goes there. It's a great way to help without doing anything extra.



Our Own Campaign Season

Donations continue to come in for the 14th Annual Sinnissippi Foundation Employee, Board, & Alumni Campaign. Held primarily in May and June, the campaign will raise over \$15,000 for the Foundation.

The Digest Newsletter

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Contributors: Phyllis Berge, Patrick Phelan, DeAnne White.

Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. is funded, in part, by the Illinois Department of Human Services

Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

www.sinnissippi.org

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Additional Locations by Appointment

Dixon-Town Square Centre

24-hour Emergency Phone Number

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*Sinnissippi Centers is accredited by
The Joint Commission and recipient of
the Gold Seal of Approval.*



**SINNISSIPPI
FOUNDATION**

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Donations

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service to Sinnissippi Centers**
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