



**Q:** What is Illinois Cares Rx? How can it help me?

**A:** Illinois Cares Rx is a free state program that provides Illinois residents with prescription assistance. There are two different coverage plans offered, BASIC and PLUS. Both plans have income eligibility guidelines; however, they have slightly different insurance coverage requirements. The BASIC plan is available for people who are either 65 years of age, or are 16 years and older with a disability. The income requirements for eligibility are \$21,218 or less annually (\$1,768 monthly) for a single person and \$28,480 or less annually (\$2,373 monthly) for a married couple. This plan covers medications for Alzheimer's, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, glaucoma, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, smoking-related illnesses, MS, osteoporosis, and Parkinson's disease. The PLUS plan is available to people who are 65 years of age and older. The PLUS plan covers almost all prescription drugs.

Each plan offers complete prescription drug coverage costs of up to \$1,750 per year. The plans require a co-pay of \$2.15 for generic medications and \$5.35 for preferred brand names. After the program has paid \$1,750, Illinois Cares Rx will still cover 80% of costs without a limit for non-Medicare Part D beneficiaries. For Medicare Part D beneficiaries, coverage is applied toward premiums and additional out-of-pocket costs; this is particularly good news to those who fall within the coverage gap (donut hole) for which Medicare does not provide assistance. The open enrollment for Illinois Cares Rx begins in November and ends on December 31, 2007. Filing an application on-line ([www.illinoiscaresrx.com](http://www.illinoiscaresrx.com)) is strongly encouraged, but the application can also be submitted through the mail. If you are interested in learning more about Illinois Cares Rx or would like help filing an application, please contact a CCHCC Hotline Advocate right away.

***For more information, call the CCHCC Consumer Health Hotline at (217) 352-6533.***

### **Downtown Parking** – by Roveiza Irfan

In early 2007, the Champaign City Council gave its final approval to a development agreement for the "M2 on Neil" project in downtown Champaign, which will have retail, office space, and residential condominiums. This project requires a multimillion-dollar investment from the City of Champaign, and the City is providing the developers with tax incentives that total \$5.56 million dollars. To serve the residents and visitors of the M2 building, the City is planning to invest an additional \$12 million to build a parking deck in the downtown area.

In order to finance the cost of building the parking deck, the City plans to raise parking rates from 25 cents an hour to 75 cents an hour in the core of downtown starting on January 1, 2008, and to 50 cents an hour in the secondary region of downtown. This is a drastic increase from the current meter rate of 25 cents per hour in all of Champaign. On top of that, the City of Champaign is planning to extend the number of hours the meters are in effect from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. The increased revenues resulting from the meter rate hikes (aprox. \$370,000) will only provide about 3% of the total revenue needed for the new parking deck.

This increase poses a problem for the clients of numerous non-profits and small businesses based in downtown Champaign, including us at CCHCC. Most clients cannot afford to pay the extra 50 cents per hour and the increase would hinder their ability to come to downtown Champaign. The City of Champaign is transferring its financial burden to the shoulders of the taxpayers who work, enjoy recreation, and provide and receive services in downtown Champaign.

These parking plans have not been finalized by the City Council and still need to be voted on. Please join us in opposing the parking rate increase by attending the regular Champaign City Council Study Session on Tuesday, November 20 at 7 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 102 N. Neil Street in Champaign. Let your voices be heard!

**Attend the City Council Study Session**  
**Tuesday, November 20 at 7 p.m.**  
**102 N. Neil, Champaign**