

Important information for us to know for our clients!

# HEARTLAND **ALLIANCE** RESEARCH & POLICY

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We are pleased to share that some key pieces of legislation on Heartland Alliance’s policy agenda have been signed into law. Each of these bills take important steps to address poverty and inequity in our state.

**SB351** – Extends SNAP (food stamp) eligibility to community college students enrolled in career and technical education certificate or degree programs.

**SB3108** – Makes key improvements to existing legislation that allows trafficking survivors to seek financial compensation from their traffickers.

**SB1246** – Protects savings accounts for individuals with disabilities, ABLE accounts, from debt collection.

**HB5341** – Makes clear that judges may not deny a petition to seal criminal records because a petitioner has outstanding legal financial obligations (such as fees imposed by the court that they can not afford).

**HB5494** – Eliminates the wait period prior to the sealing of a criminal record for survivors of trafficking who have been criminalized for their own exploitation.

Heartland Alliance was also instrumental in working with legislators and the Governor's office to ensure that the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance amount was increased in this year's budget legislation.

Thank you to the General Assembly and the Governor's Office for helping make these critical pieces of legislation Illinois law.



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## Illinois' Behavioral Health Transformation

Illinois continued its dramatic revamp of its behavioral health system, announcing a new Medicaid care coordination program called Integrated Health Homes that will bring hundreds of millions in new federal funds to the state. The new model represents an opportunity to integrate physical and behavioral health services for Medicaid enrollees with serious needs but may also cause disruption. Heartland Alliance is

pushing the state to implement these changes thoughtfully and to support treatment providers and participants during the transition. Integrated Health Homes are set to launch January 1, 2019.

Check out this [presentation](#) from the Medicaid Waiver Advisory Council or this [HA Fact Sheet](#) to learn more.



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## Secure Choice Pilot Program Launches

We are facing a national retirement savings crisis. Increasingly, older adults do not have enough savings to meet their basic needs in retirement, and younger adults do not have the money or the tools to

build retirement savings. Here in Illinois, over 2.5 million workers in Illinois lack access to an employment-based retirement plan, an important tool to build wealth.

The Illinois Asset Building Group, coordinated by Heartland Alliance, led the campaign to address this crisis, and with the help of our partners, Illinois became the first state to enact Secure Choice legislation in 2015. This legislation creates a program that will automatically enroll workers at qualifying businesses in a retirement plan, and we are excited to see it come to life as it rolls out this year.

[Read the entire blog post](#) from our Illinois Asset Building Group to learn more about Secure Choice's statewide launch.



FREE Webinar Series

Helping Justice-Involved Individuals with Mental or Substance Use Disorders, or Both: Understanding How Laws, Regulations, & Policies Affect Re-entry Opportunities – *In Illinois*

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## Webinar: Understanding How Laws, Regulations, & Policies Affect Re-entry Opportunities – In Illinois

Join Heartland Alliance Policy Director, Sam Tuttle, on September 11, 2018 - 2:00-3:30 pm CDT for a webinar conversation on understanding how laws, regulations, and policies impact re-entry. Most justice-involved individuals, particularly those with substance use and/or mental health disorders, face numerous obstacles that make it difficult to fully participate in society. There are structural barriers, including laws and policies that may impede their access to jobs, housing and education as well as personal challenges.

Sam will be joining Roberta Meyers, Director of National H.I.R.E.Network's Legal Action Center, and Phillip Barbour, Master Trainer for the Center for Health and Justice at Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC).

[Click here](#) to register and to learn more.

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### In Case You Missed It

WBEZ, [Car Title Loans Trap Low-Income Illinois Families In Debt](#)

Heartland Alliance, [Illinois Families in Deep Poverty Better Able to Meet Basic Needs Through the COIN Act](#)

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[Events Calendar](#) 

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