



# The Consumer Connection



## The Advisory Board Bids Farewell To Lillian Wurzel

It has been a long journey for Advisory Board member Lillian Wurzel. We bid her a fond farewell as her term expires June 30, 2005. Lillian served on the IHSS Public Authority Advisory Board since 1997 as one of its founding members. She brought tremendous expertise and wisdom to the Advisory Board she will be deeply missed. Lillian earned a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Chicago and spent her career helping people. She worked as an IHSS supervisor during her career, retiring in 1977. Thank you Lillian for all of your volunteer time and helping establish and grow the IHSS Public Authority. We wish you well!

## The Quality Assurance Component of IHSS: Jim Ramoni

Following the passage of last year's State budget, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) proposed an IHSS Quality Assurance (QA) Initiative as an element of the Governor's 2004/05 State Budget. The legislation outlined a number of enhanced activities to be performed to improve the quality of IHSS service need assessments, enhance program integrity, and detect and prevent program fraud and abuse. Specifically, the legislation required each county to establish a, specialized IHSS QA function or unit that performs specific activities.

Santa Clara County welcomes the opportunity to assess and evaluate the quality of our service delivery to both IHSS recipients and providers. As a result of these mandates, our IHSS program has established a QA unit headed up by manager Linda Curtis. Linda will oversee five staff who will have various responsibilities to meet the State's directives as well as develop QA activities that are relevant and specific to our own county's needs.

Additionally, the State has convened 6 workgroups to address quality assurance issues specific to various aspects of IHSS. The 6 workgroups are:

Regulations Review and Revision  
Assessment Training  
State/County QA Procedures

Hourly Task Guidelines  
Forms  
Fraud/Data Evaluation

The State has further established a dedicated website to all QA-related activities at [www.dss.cahwnet.gov/dapd/](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/dapd/). Recipient and provider input is essential as these workgroups will have a lasting impact on IHSS service delivery so if you're able, consider getting involved in this important initiative.

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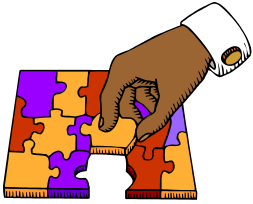
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### Advisory Board

#### Members:

*Dora Castro*  
*Sondra Corday*  
*Lee Haage*  
*Trudy Holmes*  
*David Julian*  
*Kai Lu*  
*Richard Patterson*  
*Janie Whiteford*  
*Alberta Williams*  
*Lillian Wurzel*

## Questions In Common



*“This IHSS puzzle leaves me with a lot of questions.”*

*“Caregivers call regularly looking for help putting together a support and care plan to help keep mom or dad safe and independent at home.”*



*Call a senior specialist to help you find the help you need at 408.296.8290.*

**Q: I need more help, how can I get more hours.**

**A:** If your health or circumstances have changed since your last assessment by an IHSS social worker, you have the right to call the county IHSS office and request a reassessment. You should be well prepared for this reassessment. Explain in detail how things have changed, how much longer tasks take or what you can no longer do independently and why. The Public Authority provides workshops on Assessment, Reassessment and the Appeal Process. For information call Janie Whiteford at 408-350-3232.

**Q: Can my provider take care of my pets; for example, empty the cat litter, wash the dog’s blanket, clean out the bird’s cage?**

**A:** Unfortunately, as important as your pets are to you, this is not an authorized IHSS task and you will not be given any time for it. However, you can always negotiate with your provider to do unauthorized tasks as long as you assume the financial responsibility yourself.

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## COA Information & Assistance: Lorraine Larson

The gateway to understanding and accessing senior services in Santa Clara County is the Information & Assistance Department at COA. Seniors, family members, caregivers, disabled adults, or organizations concerned with seniors can call and speak with a Senior Specialist who can provide information on all available programs, resources, eligibility, and the procedures to obtain community based services. Staff are available Monday through Friday by phone to explain available options, provide advice on how to access services, and to send to callers detailed information on all available resources.

A typical caller could be a senior looking for affordable housing and once situated will need support at home with some of the more difficult chores. Caregivers of seniors also call regularly looking for help putting together a support and care plan to help keep mom or dad safe and independent at home. Get the word out! Council on Aging is here to help with just these types of situations.

Council on Aging publishes a Senior Services Directory, which is 144 pages of the most comprehensive guide to senior services available. COA has also brought the innovative Network of Care website to Santa Clara County. This comprehensive, internet-based resource is part of a broad effort to improve and better coordinate senior services. **Call 408-296-8290** and ask for Information & Assistance to order a copy of the directory or go to our website to access the Silicon Valley Network of Care and find out more about our services. **Website: [www.careaccess.org](http://www.careaccess.org)**. Call us. A senior specialist is waiting to help you!

## Public Authority Director: Mary Tinker

The Governor's May budget revision contained the same proposal to roll back state participation in IHSS worker wages and benefits to \$6.75 per hour as in the January budget. The administration contends that the Governor's proposal does not require counties to reduce wages or benefits. However most counties could not afford to maintain wages and benefits at current levels if the state reduces their participation so significantly. In Santa Clara County this would amount to \$4.35 for every hour of IHSS provided that the county would have to supplement if wages and benefits were to remain unchanged. As of the writing of this article both houses firmly rejected the Governor's proposed cuts to IHSS. The final budget must be approved by the Assembly and the Senate before going to the Governor for his signature. It is not over yet.

Many of you attended the town hall meeting hosted by Assembly Member Rebecca Cohn and Supervisor Jim Beall. Over 300 people participated in the event making it a huge success. Several individuals gave testimony of how important IHSS is in their ability to live at home with dignity and independence. These personal stories were truly compelling providing a clear picture of the critical role IHSS plays in the daily lives of thousands of seniors and people with disabilities.

Your Advisory Board is working hard to educate legislators and the public about the potential impact of the Governor's proposal. Members of the Advisory Board and I made legislative visits June 14<sup>th</sup>, along with others from around the state, to discuss the need to maintain current IHSS funding by the state. Legislators we met with were very supportive of IHSS and encouraged more people to let their voices be heard.

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## IHSS Registry

The Public Authority Registry recruits, screens and refers providers to consumers of IHSS. IHSS consumers should contact the registry when in need of someone to provide the services authorized by the IHSS social worker. The registry has the ability to match consumers with providers in their area and will send a list of individuals to call and interview.

The registry is here to help! Call 408-296-8290 and ask for the registry.

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## Urgent Care Registry

The Urgent Care Registry (UCR) is available to IHSS consumers who have at least 50 hours of authorized services per month, and have no one else capable of providing the service. The UCR fills in when the regular IP does not show up for work and the consumer has no one else to provide the service, on a limited basis. The UCR does not fill in for vacations.

UCR is available everyday between the hours of 6:00 am and 10:00 pm. Call 408-590-0834 to contact the Urgent Care Registry.



*“Legislators we met with were very supportive of IHSS and encouraged more people to let their voices be heard.”*



*Meet your registry staff left to right: Leo Zhou, George Ruel, Mai Tran, Dora Bakaler & Maria Vidal*

## \*\*\*CONSUMER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES\*\*\*



*Training opportunities available to all IHSS consumers.*

*“Learn more about the IHSS System and getting the right care for your situation.”*

**Learn more about the IHSS System and getting the right care for your situation.**

**FOR:** Consumers, their providers, and family members. Get your questions answered!

**WHEN:** July 20th, August 17th, September 21st, October 19th, November 16th, and December 21st. All sessions are held from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

**TOPICS INCLUDE:** What is IHSS and the Public Authority? What is the Assessment and Reassessment Process? How can I find a provider? What is a good consumer-provider relationship?

**LOCATION:** Council on Aging Silicon Valley, 2115 The Alameda, San Jose.

### **VIDEOS AND CONSUMER HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE**

**Topics Include:** Public Authority IHSS System, IHSS Assessment, Reassessment & the Appeal Process, Obtaining your provider, Managing your Provider

For information and to reserve your seat call: Janie Whiteford at 408-350-3232

## **MANAGING YOUR INDEPENDENT PROVIDER**

### **Communication Is Key To A Good Consumer—Provider Relationship: Janie Whiteford**

Whether your IP is a family member, a good friend, or an individual you never knew before, good communication is a vital part of any consumer-provider relationship. As one successful consumer said, “If you are not communicating clearly with your independent provider you are set up for failure.”

Treat your IP with kindness and respect, the same way you expect to be treated. Recognize your IP’s abilities and weaknesses. Realize that it may be impossible for any IP to meet all of your expectations. Never assume your IP knows what you want or need. Clearly communicate your wants and needs to your IP and be prepared to train your IP to meet your particular needs.

Throughout the relationship with your IP good communication is essential. Explain your expectations and needs clearly at the beginning of the relationship. Be sure to explain the importance of the issue and its affects on you and your care. Explain the expected outcomes of your discussion. Remember, all relationships have difficult times. When things come up discuss them immediately, and mutually try to resolve the problem. Remember that communication is a two-way street. Allow your IP to ask questions and be receptive to their suggestions on how to resolve an issue.

Not all relationships work out no matter how hard you try to resolve issues. It is your right to terminate any relationship. Try to find a replacement IP before the termination to protect yourself. The Public Authority can help with this through the Registry. The Public Authority has a Consumer Training Program for Managing your IP. For information contact Janie Whiteford at 408-350-3232.

## Potential Issues In IHSS: Janie Whiteford

Fraud is an ugly word but it is an issue we all have to be aware of. Fraud is also a two-way street; there is consumer fraud and IP fraud. You have the **right** and **responsibility** to protect yourself and to be knowledgeable about your service.

- Make sure you are getting your full number of authorized hours
- Understand how your hours are allocated and for what tasks
- Check the time card for the correct number of hours before you sign it
- The IP works for you and can not provide service for unauthorized people in your household

You as the IHSS consumer have a responsibility to your IP

- Do not ask the IP to do tasks that are not authorized by your IHSS social worker, he/she will not be paid for performing unauthorized tasks
- If you have a share-of-cost pay the IP your share first
- If you want your IP to do unauthorized tasks, negotiate a separate contract
- Your IP is there for your needs not others in the household

If you are having difficulties with your IP relationship and are concerned about potential fraud contact an IHSS social worker or the Public Authority.

## Prevent Senior Financial Exploitation

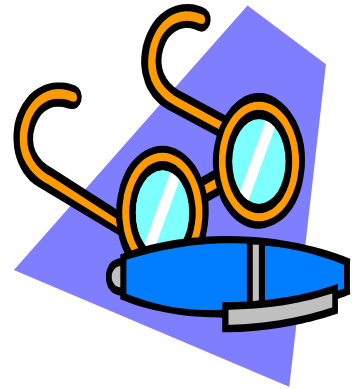
Designed to enhance your knowledge in the area of Elder Financial Exploitation. Get all your questions answered at one of the many Educational Workshops such as, Consumer Scams, Telemarketing Fraud, Sweepstakes Fraud, & other scams that target elderly persons. Come relax, enjoy the day and enter a drawing for great prizes! No registration required, simply attend.

WHEN: Monday, August 1, 2005  
8:30 am — 3:30 pm

WHERE: Santa Clara Convention Center  
5001 Great American Parkway  
Santa Clara, CA 95054

- \* No Admission Fee and No Registration Required
- \* Free Continental Breakfast (8:30 - 9:30) & Lunch (12:00)
- \* Win Great Prizes
- \* Come & learn how to protect yourself from financial scams & abuse
- \* Free transportation from specific sites
- \* Free Parking

For more information call: (408) 635-1724



*Always check the time card and sign it for the exact number of hours provided by your IP.*

### Senior Forum

#### Sponsored by:

*Financial Institutions Team  
Santa Clara County,  
Department of Aging and  
Adult Services*



*Learn how to protect yourself from financial scams and fraud.*



IHSS Public Authority  
2115 The Alameda  
San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: 408-350-3206  
Fax: 408-296-8340  
Email: [publicauthority@scccoa.org](mailto:publicauthority@scccoa.org)

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[PUBLICAUTHORITYSANTACLARA.ORG](http://PUBLICAUTHORITYSANTACLARA.ORG)

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*"We are here to help."*



## Important Phone Numbers

**Public Authority** (Call for information concerning provider benefits, or services of the Public Authority.) **408-350-3206**

**Registry** (Call for a list of available providers.) **408-296-8290**

**IHSS Social Services** (Call for information regarding authorized hours/services or to speak with a social worker.) **408-928-3737**

**IHSS Payroll Hotline** (Call for any payroll matter.) **408-928-3887**

**Adult Protective Services** **408-928-3860**

**24-hour Hotline** (Call for help if you or someone you know suspect abuse of a senior or dependent adult. ) **1-800-414-2002**

**Information and Assistance** (Call to obtain information on available services in Santa Clara County.) **408-296-8290**  
**or 1-800-510-2020**  
(In County only)