



THE CONSUMER CONNECTION



Advisory Board Chair: David Julian

The Advisory Board is one of the state mandated functions of the IHSS Public Authority. It is made up of eleven members of whom at least 50 percent are individuals who are current or past users of personal care assistance services. The Advisory Board studies, reviews, evaluates and makes recommendations to the Governing Body (Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors) and Public Authority Director relative to any matters affecting persons receiving In-Home Supportive Services in Santa Clara County.

The Advisory Board is the voice of the consumer in the IHSS system. To that end we need to hear from you, the consumer, about how the program is working for you and how we can improve it for the benefit of consumers and providers.

We meet the third Tuesday of every month from 12:00-2:00 PM at the Council on Aging, Silicon Valley, 2115 The Alameda, San Jose. Our meetings are open to the public and provide opportunity for public comment at the beginning of each meeting. We welcome your involvement and support.

News Update From In-Home Supportive Services Manager: Jim Ramoni

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this first edition of the Public Authority's newsletter, The Consumer Connection. The Public Authority and the In-Home Supportive Services program maintain an excellent working relationship to best serve both the consumers and the providers of IHSS here in Santa Clara County.

Founded in 1973, the core goal of the IHSS program remains the prevention of premature or unnecessary placement of consumers in institutions (skilled nursing facilities, community care facilities or hospitals).

The IHSS program currently serves over 10,000 consumers throughout Santa Clara County. My staff of social workers, eligibility workers, and administrative support staff are responsible for a variety of tasks that combined provide assessments, eligibility determinations and payroll transactions for nearly 18,000 individuals. We are a dedicated group committed to serving you as professionally and efficiently as possible.

In the coming months, we will be implementing several program enhancements that I know will make for a more efficient, customer-friendly program. I encourage your participation with the Advisory Board to ultimately provide feedback that I can translate into program enhancements and improvements. IHSS is so vital to so many, and your thoughts are appreciated and welcomed.

Volume 1, Issue 1 Winter 2005

Inside this issue:

<i>Questions In Common</i>	2
<i>Drug Benefit</i>	2
<i>From The Director</i>	3
<i>IHSS Registry</i>	3
<i>Consumer Education Opportunities</i>	4
<i>Urgent Care Registry</i>	5
<i>Elder Financial Abuse</i>	5
<i>Important Phone Numbers</i>	6

Advisory Board

Members:

Dora Castro

Sondra Corday

Linda Curtis

Lee Haage

Trudy Holmes

David Julian

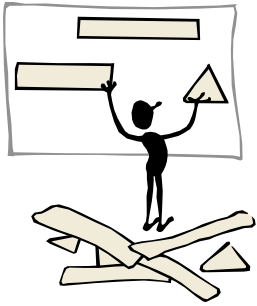
Kai Lu

Richard Patterson

George Ruel

Janie Whiteford

Lillian Wurzel



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

Questions In Common

Q: Can the provider take me to church or to recreational activities such as Christmas in the park or to visit friends?

A: No, this would not be considered an authorized service. IHSS transportation is generally authorized for medical appointments only. Contact Outreach at (408) 436-2865 to obtain information about their services. You can also call Information and Assistance for other available transportation options: 408-296-8290.

Q: I need my house cleaned inside and out for rent inspection is this ok?

A: This may be considered heavy cleaning and should be discussed with an IHSS social worker. Under certain circumstances the county social worker can authorize additional hours for a specific period of time. If this is your situation call the county at 408-928-3737 and ask for the officer of the day.

“A discount card with Medicare’s seal of approval can help you save money on prescription drugs.”

Drug Benefit: Lorraine Larson

Don’t miss out on prescription drug coverage. Sign up before the end of the year to receive this prescription drug credit!

Medicare Approved Drug Discount Cards (06-01-2004 – 12/31/2005)

Starting June 2004, Medicare contracted with private companies to offer Medicare-approved drug discount cards. The discount cards will be valid until December 31, 2005. The cost for the card will not exceed \$30 a year and in many cases will be lower. A discount card with Medicare’s seal of approval can help you save money on prescription drugs.

Eligibility: Voluntary, Medicare eligible person without full Medi-Cal

Enrollment: Starts June 2004 ends December 31, 2005

Savings: Estimated 10-25%

Cost: up to \$30 per year

Credit for Low Income – You may qualify for \$600 credit if your income is below
 Single \$12,569 / year Married Couple \$16,862 / year

There is neither a fee nor an asset test to qualify for this discount card.

Benefit is \$600 in 2005. This money can be used to buy prescription drugs and is available right away. Sign up before the end of March to receive the entire \$600.

For further information contact the HICAP Program at Council on Aging Silicon Valley (408) 296-8290 or go to www.medicare.gov



Sign up for your discount drug card.

Public Authority Director: Mary Tinker

Governor Schwarzenegger released his proposed state budget January 10, 2005 for fiscal year 2005-2006. IHSS is once again targeted for cuts but remember that this is where the budget negotiating starts. The legislature must approve the budget and it never looks exactly the same in its final version as when the Governor first proposes it.

The largest component of the IHSS cuts is a roll back of state participation in wages and benefits effective October 1, 2005 to minimum wage. In the proposal the state would no longer participate in funding wages and benefits above \$6.75 per hour. This could impact the ability of IHSS consumers to recruit and retain providers. The pool of providers would most likely shrink if wages were rolled back to \$6.75 from the current \$10.50 per hour and if benefits were no longer available to providers. The Governor’s budget proposes to shift the burden to the county if local government wants to maintain wages and benefits at current levels. In Santa Clara County this gap would amount to \$4.35 per hour to cover wages and benefits.

Santa Clara County is already facing a budget deficit and would be hard pressed to find the additional funds to make up the state share. The Public Authority is working closely with CAPA, the California Association of Public Authorities, and other stakeholders to develop strategies to prevent the proposed cuts in IHSS. You can help by sending us your story letting us know how these cuts will impact you. Mail your story to: Public Authority, 2115 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126

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 does not conduct criminal background checks on providers in Santa Clara County. However consumers have the right to ask their provider to be fingerprinted. The registry provides written information about how the fingerprinting process works. Consumers are the employer of their IHSS provider and are responsible to select, hire, train, supervise and terminate their provider.

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



How will the proposed budget cuts impact you? Mail us your story:

*IHSS Public Authority
2115 The Alameda
San Jose, CA 95126*

“Consumers have the right to ask their provider to be fingerprinted.”



The registry can mail you a list of available homecare workers.

*****CONSUMER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES*****

Learn More About In-Home Supportive Services, The Public Authority And How It Can Work For You!

Are you sometimes confused and feel lost using IHSS? Would you like to make the consumer provider working relationship better for everyone? These workshops will help answer many of your concerns. Come join us!

TIME: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 1:00-3:00 PM

TOPIC: What is IHSS and How Does it Work? What is The Public Authority and How Can It Help Me?

TIME: Wednesday, March 16, 2005 1:00-3:00 PM

TOPIC: The IHSS Assessment and Reassessment Process: I can help myself by being an informed consumer.

TIME: Wednesday, April 20, 1:00-3:00 PM

TOPIC: Managing Your Provider: A good working relationship between the consumer and provider makes a huge difference in the quality of the experience. Learn how to effectively train and skillfully manage your provider to develop a good relationship.

LOCATION: Council on Aging, Silicon Valley, 2115 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126 Seating is limited so call today to reserve your seat: Janie Whiteford at 408-350-3232

VIDEOS AVAILABLE

The Public Authority has produced three videos for use by consumers and community organizations to borrow at no cost. These videos are available in English and Spanish.

VIDEO I: Toward Independence

VIDEO II: IHSS Assessment: What to Expect

VIDEO III: Hiring Your IHSS Care Provider

CONSUMER HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE

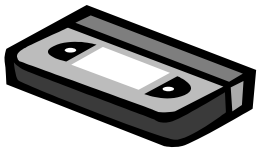
The Public Authority developed the following four consumer handbook modules which are available to consumers, interested individuals and organizations at no cost.

- Public Authority IHSS System Introduction
- The IHSS Assessment, Reassessment & Appeal Process
- Obtaining Your Independent Provider
- Managing Your Independent Provider



Training opportunities available to all IHSS consumers.

“A good working relationship between the consumer and provider makes a huge difference in the quality of the experience.”



Videos and handbooks are available at no cost.

Urgent Care Registry

The Urgent Care Registry (UCR) is a component of the IHSS Registry. The UCR provides a safety net for IHSS consumers whose provider does not show up for work and who has no one else available to assist them.

The UCR is available to IHSS consumers who have 50 hours or more of authorized services per month, and have no one else capable of providing the service. Consumers may only access the UCR a maximum of two times per month and must have need of some personal care services which would cause a health risk if left until the regular worker returns.

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.



When your regular provider is sick and unable to work call the Urgent Care Registry.

Elder Financial Abuse: Cindy Hendricks, Deputy District Attorney

Elder financial abuse is on the rise and everyone over age 65 is at risk. There is no one socioeconomic group that is more or less at risk, so everyone needs to be on guard. Even people without assets may have excellent credit that makes them a prime target for identity thieves. Surprisingly, the majority of perpetrators are the relatives, friends or caregivers of their victims. That doesn't mean you need to distrust your family, friends and caregivers. It just means that you need to take steps to make yourself less likely to be a victim.

If you have someone helping you with your finances, make sure you or someone else who you trust balances your books. If you give your ATM or credit card to someone to buy your necessities, be clear about what they have permission to do, and insist on receipts for all transactions. Never give out personal information over the phone to someone who calls you. Don't fall for anyone telling you that you won something that you have to pay money to receive. If it sounds too good to be true – IT IS! And most importantly, look out for your friends. Report all instances of suspected abuse to Adult Protective Services at 1-800-414-2002.

“Even people without assets may have excellent credit that makes them a prime target for identity thieves.”



Protect your identity and your assets.



IHSS Public Authority
2115 The Alameda
San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: 408-350-3206
Fax: 408-296-8340
Email: publicauthority@scccoa.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
PUBLICAUTHORITYSANTACLARA.ORG



"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)