



The Consumer Connection

Winter 2016

Public Authority Services
by Sourcewise



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Overtime Pay Changes for IHSS Providers

By Ross Graham

On February 1, 2016, the hourly pay rate for IHSS Independent Care Providers (IPs) in Santa Clara County increased to \$13.00 per hour. Also starting February 1st, all IHSS care providers will be eligible for overtime pay. The first 40 hours in each workweek will be paid at the new regular rate of \$13.00 per hour; any additional hours worked in the same week will be paid at the overtime rate. The workweek is from Sunday through Saturday.

This will not affect your monthly authorized service hours. Each consumer still has the same number of monthly hours, which can be divided among different IPs. However, limits on the amount of overtime a care provider can be paid still apply. A multi-page document explaining the rules regarding overtime pay was recently mailed to all consumers and care providers.

Help is available to assist you and your IP(s) to understand and adhere to these new rules. A summary of the important changes that may affect you:



- You will have a grace period of three months to learn the new overtime rules, allowing you time to adapt to these changes.
- Starting May 1, 2016, the new rules regarding overtime pay must be followed and will be enforced.
- In February, important information was mailed regarding your number of hours, workweek agreement forms, and scheduling instructions. This will also help IPs plan their hours and divide time among consumers.
- Because overtime is paid based on how many hours are worked in one workweek, every IHSS case will now have a “Maximum Weekly

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Hours” guideline number. This number will help you plan a work schedule with your provider(s). The Maximum Weekly Hours is simply your monthly hours divided by four.

- The limits on IP pay depend on how many consumers each IP works for. If an IP works for more than one consumer, then that provider will have a new limit. In the case of multiple clients, the IP cannot be paid more than 66 hours per workweek. You will need to prepare a work schedule with your provider(s), and stay within the 66 hour limit.
- Check your personal information (which was provided to you by mail), including your specific case information.
- Some providers will need to reduce the total number of hours worked – based on the new 66 hour limit– and may not be available to work as many hours for you.
- If your IP is not available for the hours you request due to the new 66 hour workweek limit, you will need to hire one or more additional providers to meet your needs. Remember that the 66 hour workweek limit only applies if your IP works for more than one consumer.
- If your provider works only for you, (not for any other IHSS consumers) the limit on their pay each week is equal to your Maximum Weekly Hours.

Your provider can work the number of Maximum Weekly Hours you are entitled to.

- As detailed in the documents mailed by the state, these changes allow you the continued flexibility to adjust your IP’s work schedule from week to week, based on your needs.
- You will need approval from the County in order for your IP to work additional overtime hours. As usual, you must never authorize more hours for your IP(s) than your Maximum Monthly Hours allow.

Please check your mail for more information about these changes regarding pay and scheduling, or review the “Additional Resources” inset.

Additional Resources

If you or your IP want additional information on the new overtime rules:

- Watch your mail for more training information
- Visit our website at www.pascc.org/overtime
- Email your specific questions to info@pascc.org
- Contact a Public Authority Registry Specialist at: (408) 350-3251

Join the IHSS Advisory Board

The IHSS Advisory Board is a state mandated group of volunteers appointed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to provide ongoing advice and recommendations about IHSS.

Currently there are three vacancies on the Advisory Board. If you are interested in learning more about it, and perhaps seeking appointment to join, contact the Public Authority at: (408) 350-3286.

This is a great place to bring concerns about IHSS and how service is being delivered. Meetings are generally held the third Tuesday of every month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and are open to the public.

Lower Your Monthly Bills

The California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) or Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) programs can provide a discount on monthly gas and electricity bills for qualifying households. These programs are available through all California energy utilities, including PG&E.

For more information, or to sign up, please call your electric company directly or visit the assistance section of their website. For information on additional programs that can help with utility and other household bills, please contact the Sourcewise Information and Awareness team: (408) 350-3200 Option 1.

Utilizing the Registry: Provider Training

By Araceli Gaona

The Public Authority Registry maintains a pool of Independent Providers (IPs) who are available for in-home supportive services recipients (consumers). These care providers are carefully screened before being referred to IHSS consumers. In addition to the screening process, registry IPs must complete a special three hour Registry Introduction Training. The ultimate goal of this training is to provide the tools necessary for IPs to be better prepared to care for IHSS consumers. Topics covered during this special training include IHSS, universal precautions, reporting abuse, confidentiality, professionalism and work etiquette.

Any type of home care training is beneficial, and we highlight the training that each IP has received on

the list we send you. Each IP has a list of completed training (a mini résumé) next to their name, and when a consumer receives a list of care providers from the Registry, they should consider all training that the IP has completed. Knowing that your IP has completed essential training can ease your mind when selecting a potential care provider. Training may also include other classes offered by Public Authority, such as Nutrition, Mental Health, First Aid, and others.

If you have more questions, or need a customized list of registry providers available to you, please contact the Public Authority Registry: (408) 350-3251.

Health and Safety in the Home: Reporting Elder Abuse

By Araceli Gaona and Fran Kiernan

Did you know that your Independent Provider (IP) is required by law to report any suspected abuse of you or anyone else living in your home? Under California law, your IP is a “Mandated Reporter”, which means that they must report any observed or suspected abuse to Adult Protective Services (APS), or law enforcement. If your IP sees a family member, friend, another care provider, or anyone else abusing you, they are obligated to immediately report this to the authorities. Your IP can be a lifeline in abusive situations; their report to APS will connect you with the help that you need.

Independent Providers are trained to identify various types of abuse, including: physical, financial, sexual, psychological, and neglect. However, most people don't realize that self-neglect is also a type of abuse that must be reported. If you are neglecting your own physical needs and well-being –such as refusing to eat or shower– your provider must report this to APS. Your IP is complying with state law and following the requirements of their employment.

There are serious consequences if your care provider fails to report any suspected abuse. First, you will not

get the help you need. Secondly, your provider may be fined and/or jailed for not complying with the law.

Ultimately, your health and safety is the top priority for your care provider. Your IP is trained to use their best judgement to decide when it is appropriate to contact emergency services. Even though you may think you don't need an ambulance or paramedics, these may be life-saving resources. Trust your IP to make this call for you. Fear of receiving a bill for calling emergency services might be holding you back, so just know that you will not be billed for calling or for having emergency services, such as the fire department and paramedics, come to your home. You will only receive a bill from the ambulance company if the paramedics take you to the hospital.

Hopefully, knowing that your care provider has the responsibility to keep you safe will offer you some peace of mind. By understanding your IP's job responsibilities, you can begin to appreciate their efforts on your behalf. Having an idea of the “big picture” will help to create a work environment that is safe and respectful for everyone.

Call and Connect Sessions

By Shannin Prather

Public Authority by Sourcewise invites you to join us for Call and Connect sessions, exclusively available to IHSS consumers. Beginning in February 2016, Public Authority Services will partner with the Senior Center Without Walls (an ESC Senior Resources Program) to offer no-cost training and information sessions. You are welcome to participate -via telephone- from the comfort of your home!

The free, informative training sessions are available using a conference call format. When you register for a Call and Connect session, you will be provided a toll-free number to call and join the session. Each session is one hour in length, and allows participants to interact and ask questions, or simply listen to the valuable information provided.

The sessions will be held from 11:00am to 12:00pm on the 2nd Thursday each month. The scheduled topics for Call and Connect sessions will include:

February: New Overtime Rules: Overview of Changes, Overtime, and Frequently Asked Questions

March: Creating a Back-up Plan for Your Care

April: Tips for Hiring and Retaining a Care Provider

May: New Overtime Rules: Managing Hours and Avoiding Violations for Your Provider

These sessions are a great way to connect with others and learn valuable information about in-home supportive services.

There will be a limit of 50 consumers on each call. To register for the Call and Connect sessions, please call: (408) 557-4719.

For more information regarding training for IHSS consumers and care providers, please visit the Public Authority Services website: www.pascc.org.

The Importance of a Back-Up Plan

By Araceli Gaona and Fran Kiernan

As an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumer, it is critical that you have a back-up plan in place in case your regular provider is not available. Life circumstances such as illness, injury, or time off can create the unexpected need to have someone else assist you. It is your responsibility as the IHSS consumer to create a plan and have safety nets in place for this. Have family members or friends that are familiar with your care on notice, so that they may be called upon to help. Have the names and phone

numbers of these individuals on hand and ready to go.

In addition, the new IHSS overtime rules will put a cap on how many hours your provider can work in a week. A ripple effect of this will be that your provider may not be able to work all your hours if they reach their maximum. You will need another provider as a back-up. It is highly encouraged that you explore the idea of hiring an additional provider for this need, should it arise. Having two providers will ensure a smooth transition from one provider to another. It will turn what would otherwise be a daunting situation into a stress-free one.

For assistance in hiring an additional provider, please contact the Public Authority Registry: (408) 350-3251



Staying Healthy: Avoiding Falls

By Shannin Prather

Regardless of age, or level of physical ability, making changes to your living environment can lower the risk of falls. Keeping your home environment safe and neat helps you stay healthy and safe as well. By taking precautions and making sure walk areas are clear, and keeping your home tidy, you can avoid common hazards that may cause a fall or mishap, and stay safe and secure.

Here are some helpful tips to avoid trips, slips and falls:

- **Wear Secure Footwear:** Wear well-fitting shoes with low or no heel, and non-slip soles, Opt for slippers with closed toes and closed heels.
- **Light up Your Living Space:** Use nightlights near your bed, in hallways, stairways, and bathrooms, and any other areas where you frequently visit at night.
- **Remove Loose Area Rugs:** Loose area rugs can be very hazardous and the safest method to prevent falls is to remove them. If unwilling to remove them, consider using special rug tape that will ensure rugs stays in place. When selecting an area rug, choose those with nonskid bottoms.
- **Secure Power and Telephone Cords:** Keep cords against walls or taped down to the floor, and out of walk areas.
- **Keep Mobility Devices Close:** If you rely on a cane, walker, crutches or wheelchair, always keep these devices nearby, and easily accessible.
- **Install Grab Bars in Your Bathroom:** The bathroom can be a very slippery place! Using a towel bar for support can be a hazardous mistake. A towel bar is not meant to hold a person's weight; it can easily break and cause a fall. Installing grab bars would be a better solution. Grab bars are designed to withstand a person's weight and stay secure. The cost of these items may be covered by Medicare or MediCal under the "durable medical equipment" category. Organizations such as Rebuilding Together and Assisted Living Delayed

can assist with installation of grab bars. They can also evaluate your home for safety and offer other suggestions for modifications.

- **Take Your Time:** When changing from a laying down position to sitting, or from sitting to standing, take a moment to maintain your balance and avoid becoming dizzy.
- **Be Aware of Your Medication's Side Effects:** Illnesses and some medicines can make you feel dizzy or confused. Medications such as blood pressure pills, heart medicines, diuretics (water pills), muscle relaxants, and sleeping pills can increase your risk of falling. Use caution with movement when on these medications.
- **Get Daily Exercise:** Even a few minutes of exercise each day can go a long way toward improving balance, coordination and strength.



Speak to your doctor to discuss if any accessibility products (such as grab bars) may benefit you. For more information about installing grab bars and to have a safety evaluation of your home, please call our Sourcewise Information & Awareness Specialists at: (408) 350-3200, option #1.

For more information on fall prevention, please call the Silicon Valley Healthy Aging Partnership at: (408) 482-4961 or visit their website: www.svhap.org.



Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise



Public Authority Services by Sourcewise www.pascc.org
Phone: (408) 350-3206 Fax: (408) 296-8340 E-mail: info@pascc.org

Important Phone Numbers

Public Authority Services by Sourcewise

Information concerning provider benefits, Eco/Clipper Pass, training or other services of the Public Authority.
(408) 350-3206

Public Authority Services Registry

Call the Registry, if you need help finding an IHSS care provider.
(408) 350-3251

IHSS Social Services

Information regarding authorized hours and services or to speak with a social worker.
(408) 792-1600

IHSS Payroll

Call for any payroll or timesheet matters.
(408) 792-1600

UNION SEIU Local 2015

Representing providers. Call for information about the Union and payroll deductions.
(855) 810-2015

Adult Protective Services

24-hour Hotline. Call for help, if you or someone you know suspect abuse of a senior or dependent adult.
(408) 975-4900
(800) 414-2002

Sourcewise Information & Awareness

Information on available services in Santa Clara County.
(408) 350-3200, option 1

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