



# The Consumer Connection

Winter 2017

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Getting Started with a New Care Provider

By Shannin Prather

Do you have questions about hiring a care provider? If you are new to IHSS, or haven't hired a new care provider recently, you may want to know how to start teaching a new care provider the ways that you like things to be done and what your exact needs are. Building a positive relationship creates a safe and secure working environment—and this begins even before the provider's first day working for you.

When interviewing a potential care provider, openly share your expectations. Discuss any difficult issues and agree on things before hiring your employee. Review services authorized for you by IHSS to make sure that the care provider is capable and comfortable with these responsibilities. Share information about any health issues: allergies, special diet needs, infectious diseases, and other conditions requiring special care. This information will help the care provider make an informed decision about whether to accept the position, if you offer it.

Review the number of weekly hours you want the care provider to work, as well as any specific schedule requirements



(days and times) during the interview to ensure that your needs match their availability. Also, once hired, decide on a method of keeping track of the hours worked so timesheets can be completed and signed in a timely manner.

On your care provider's first day, share instructions about how you would like tasks to be completed, as well as the location of necessary tools and supplies. As an employer, you are responsible for providing cleaning supplies and any necessary protective equipment (such as gloves or face masks). Give your new employee a tour of the areas they will work in so that they can begin to feel comfortable in their new work environment.

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In case of an emergency, information about your medications and medical history should be easily accessible, and it is a good idea to share your daily medication needs and schedule with providers once you have formed a trusting relationship. This information is very important if you ever experience a medical emergency. If 911 is ever called on your behalf, the first responders will need to know about medications you are taking, as well as your age and medical history. Along with this information, keep a list of emergency contact information (such as a family member or trusted friend) and your primary care doctor.

If you need to receive a list of pre-screened IHSS care providers that you can interview, please call the Public Authority Registry, (408) 350-3251.

## Home Modifications: Stay Safe in Your Home

By Shannin Prather

Home is a place of comfort and safety. However, many times our homes are not designed with the special needs required to safely and successfully age in place. Over time, we must honor our changing wants and needs by adjusting our home environment.

As we get older, age affects our vision, mobility, reaction time, and endurance, which may make it difficult to safely perform daily activities. Arthritis or other health issues may lower joint flexibility and strength. Simple tasks (such as opening a jar or buttoning your shirt) may become challenging. This can lead to some very real and practical issues, but

with planning and thinking ahead we can make small changes to our homes to increase our safety, especially with activities such as getting in and out of the house, using the bathroom, and going up and down stairs.

Simple home modifications can help ease some of the difficulties we

may experience. Some individuals develop ways to work around problems instead of fixing them. This may not be the best choice, and may even lead to a risk of accidents or injury. Consider which changes are needed for your situation, and write a list. Once you identify the challenges, you can work with professionals to determine a plan for safe options to use at home.

Community resources are available to help. Area Agencies on Aging, including Sourcewise in Santa Clara County, can help you find resources in your community. Organizations specializing in home modifications will assist you with making the changes that allow you to stay safely in your home, and are available for little or no cost to you.

Organizations can assess your home environment and recommend modifications such as: ramps, railings, grab bars, heightened toilet seats, bath chairs, and other products. These items are designed to provide additional safety and stability in your daily activities.

Community Resource Specialists of Sourcewise can provide referrals and information on resources to help you with home modifications, as well as other community resources. To speak with a Community Resource Specialist call the Information and Awareness Department of Sourcewise: (408) 350-3200, option 1.



# Managing Medications Safely

By Shannin Prather

As our bodies mature, we are often prescribed numerous medications to maintain our health. According to a 2010 article in *American Nurse Today*, “44% of men and 57% of women older than age 65 take five or more medications per week.”

In addition to prescriptions, an estimated 90% of seniors use over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies, and/or vitamins which are not reported to their doctors. Older adults and individuals with disabilities may metabolize drugs differently; and may be more susceptible to negative medication interactions and side effects. Protect yourself by learning about possible side effects and negative interactions of your prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs.

Learn how to safely use your medications:

**Drug Interactions are a Special Concern.** Adverse drug reactions are among the top five health threats to seniors. Combining prescribed medications with over-the-counter medicines and/or herbal remedies can cause negative reactions. To prevent negative drug interactions, inform your doctor about all medications, herbal supplements, and vitamins that you are taking. Keep a list of all current medications and bring it to every doctor’s appointment.

**Take Medications as Directed and Learn about Side Effects.** Seniors and individuals with disabilities can be especially sensitive to new medications. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects of



prescribed medications, and how they may react with other medicines that you take.

Most pharmacies provide written instructions regarding how and when to take new medications and information about possible side effects. Read this information carefully and retain it for future reference. When you begin a new medication, inform your care provider. Understanding your possible side effects will help them to best care for you.

**Skipping Doses Can Be Just as Dangerous as Taking a Double Dose.** Low income individuals are concerned about the cost of medications and may try to make their prescription last longer. Skipping prescribed doses of a medication may reduce the effectiveness of the medication and interfere with important health benefits. For help with paying for medications, check into prescription assistance programs and supplemental drug plans.

Be mindful of the medications you take and follow the instructions of your doctor. To learn more about resources that can help with the cost of your medications, contact a Sourcewise Community Resource Specialist: (408) 350-3200, option 1.

## Community Resource Highlight: Farewell to Falls

If you are age 65 or older and have fallen recently, or are concerned about falling, you may be eligible to participate in a FREE, home-based, fall prevention program offered through the Trauma Service at Stanford Hospital & Clinics.

The *Farewell to Falls* program works with older adults to help reduce falls by providing in-home risk assessment, preventative planning, and education through home visits by a registered occupational therapist.

For more information about Farewell to Falls, call: (650) 724-9369.

# Provider Enrollment Agreement Form SOC 846 Must Be Returned by April, 29 2017

By Shannin Prather

In February 2016, changes to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Provider Enrollment Agreement Form (SOC 846) went into effect, caused by the new rules regarding overtime and travel time pay. All IHSS care providers enrolled prior to January 2016 are required to sign the updated form, confirming understanding of the new rules.

As of December 2016, over 1700 IHSS care providers in Santa Clara County have not returned the SOC 846 form. IHSS sent a letter (including an attached SOC 846 form) to those who have not returned the signed form, to advise that the form MUST be signed and returned to the IHSS office by April 29, 2017, or they will be terminated as an IHSS provider.

For the employment of your provider, and for your well-being, we urge all care recipients to check with your care providers to make sure they have signed and returned the SOC 846 form to IHSS. It is required for their employment with IHSS to continue.

All IHSS care providers enrolled prior to January 2016 are required to sign the updated form, confirming understanding of the new rules.

If a care provider is unsure whether their updated SOC 846 form has been received, they are advised to contact the IHSS Overtime/Travel Time Hotline at (408) 792-1600: When calling, providers should first select language preference, then press option 2 (for providers), and next press option 3 for Overtime Hotline staff.

## Call and Connect Schedule

By Shannin Prather

Public Authority Services continues to partner with Senior Center Without Walls to offer no-cost training and information sessions, which are exclusively available to IHSS consumers. You are welcome to participate via telephone from the comfort of your home!

Sessions will be held on the second Thursday of each month, from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The following informative topics are scheduled for upcoming Call and Connect sessions:

### February:

Tips for Training a New Care Provider

### March:

Understanding roles: IHSS, Social Workers, Care Providers, and the Public Authority

### April:

How Public Authority Registry Helps You Find Providers

### May:

Tips to Improve Communication and Listening Skills

We would love to hear your suggestions for topics that would be valuable to the IHSS consumer community for future Call and Connect Sessions! To make suggestions or register for upcoming Call and Connect Sessions, please call the Public Authority Training Department: (408) 350-3220.

# Guide to In-Home Supportive Services Assistance

By Shannin Prather

We understand the importance of feeling in control of your situation. Below, we've provided a guide of which organization or department to contact for answers to IHSS-related questions that IHSS care recipients and IHSS care providers commonly have.

## When to contact In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

General Phone: (408) 792-1600

Fax: (408) 792-1601

### Consumer Issues

- To call your Social Worker for questions about reassessments of approved hours and services
- To request a Designation of Provider Form (SOC 426A) after hiring a new care provider
- To request a change of address form

### Provider Issues

- For timesheet or paycheck questions
- For questions about workers compensation
- For timesheet replacement
- For questions about tax forms
- For a change of address form



## When to contact Public Authority Services by Sourcewise (PA)

General Phone: (408) 350-3206

[www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org)

### Consumer Issues

- To request a list of available care providers, call the PA Registry: (408) 350-3251
- To join a Call and Connect session, call the PA Training Department: (408) 350-3220

### Provider Issues

- Call the PA Benefits Department for questions about medical, dental, vision or Eco Pass: (408) 350-3290
- Call the PA Enrollment Department for questions about the steps in becoming an IHSS care provider: (408) 350-3252
- Call the PA Training Department for questions about provider training classes: (408) 350-3220

## When to contact Sourcewise

General Phone: (408) 350-3200

[www.mysourcewise.com](http://www.mysourcewise.com)

Sourcewise provides access to information on, and referrals to, resources and services, assistance understanding Medicare, senior employment opportunities and training, a senior nutrition program, personalized care management solutions, and more.

If you need help but aren't sure where to begin, contact the Sourcewise Information and Awareness Team: (408) 350-3200, option 1



# Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise



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