



# The Consumer Connection

Fall 2018

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Advisory Board Recommends Increase to IHSS Support Staffing

By Shannin Prather

Annually, Public Authority Services by Sourcewise (PA) gathers information highlighting the work that has been accomplished in assisting In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers and Independent Care Providers (IPs) during the previous fiscal year that occurs between July 1 and June 30. Information is gathered into an annual report which is presented to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

A few key items from the PA Services 2017/2018 Annual Report include:

- Number of IPs who attended a training class: 1,973
- Number of provider lists sent to consumers by the Registry: 3,632
- Typical range of new IPs enrolled each business day: 30–50
- Average number of benefits-based phone calls with IPs each month: 1,500

The PA Services Annual Report also serves as a forum for the IHSS Public Authority Advisory Board to make recommendations regarding any and all matters affecting individuals

receiving IHSS in Santa Clara County. Recommendations are provided to the Public Authority Governing Body, Public Authority Services Director, and IHSS County Administration.

The recommendations made in 2018 focused on the need for an increase in the number of IHSS support staff—individuals who, among other tasks, answer phones, assist visitors in the lobby, and scan state-required forms—to meet the growing demand in workload.

IHSS has not increased the number of clerical staff in 11 years. At the same time, the number of IHSS consumers and the number of Social Workers being supported by the clerical staff has more than doubled.

View the entire Public Authority Services 2017/2018 Annual Report, including the Advisory Board recommendations, in the resources library on the Public Authority Services website: [www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org).

# Public Authority Services Offers Care Provider Benefits

By Ross Graham

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Independent Care Providers (IPs) are eligible for full medical benefits at a cost of only \$25 per month when they meet the eligibility requirements.

Public Authority Benefits Specialists are available to help you and your IPs understand the many benefits available to IPs working for IHSS recipients. Specialists will answer questions on how and when to apply for benefits, what eligibility requirements include, and how to maintain eligibility once enrolled.

These valuable benefits make it easier for consumers like you to attract and keep high quality care providers in the IHSS program.

Care recipients can inform their IPs that they may apply and take advantage of these great benefits. Help your IP maintain eligibility for these important health benefits by reviewing and signing

IP timesheets quickly so the IP will be paid on time each pay period.

An IP must work for an IHSS consumer, must be paid by the IHSS program, and must work at least 35 hours each month in order to be eligible to apply for Medical Health Insurance from Valley Health Plan. This insurance is paid for by Santa Clara County through the IHSS program, with the exception of the \$25 monthly cost mentioned previously.

Working IPs are also eligible to apply for these benefits at no extra cost:

- Dental and Vision plan insurance coverage.
- A VTA bus pass covering Valley Transit Authority bus and light rail lines.
- Santa Clara County Federal Credit Union membership including a free checking account and other financial services.

To learn more about the benefits available to IHSS care providers, including eligibility requirements, visit the Public Authority Services website at [www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org).

If you have any questions, please call our Public Authority Benefits Specialists at (408) 350-3290.



## Thank You for Your Patience

By Public Authority Management

This year, as the summer changed into autumn, Public Authority Services (PA) staff also experienced several changes of their own. Changes included welcoming a new Registry Manager, a Care Coordinator, and a Registry Specialist. Recruitment continues for additional Care Coordinators, as well as a Public Authority Support Specialist.

We are extremely proud of all of our staff members who pulled together to support each other to continue the valuable work of serving the needs of IHSS consumers and care providers.

To all In-Home Supportive Services consumers and providers, please accept our most heartfelt thank you for your patience and understanding over the past few months.

# Talk to Your Doctor About Your Eye Health

By Shannin Prather

Many adults are not getting screened for vision problems on a regular basis, which means that eye diseases may not be diagnosed and treated early enough to prevent vision loss, according to the findings of a new University of Michigan/AARP poll.

More than 40% of those polled who have not seen an eye doctor in three or more years reported that they have not had their eyes checked because they were not having any vision problems at the time. Others said they were worried about the cost of an eye exam or that they simply had not made the time.

“Vision loss affects an older adult’s overall health, risk of falling, social interactions, and quality of life,” says Alison Bryant, Senior Vice President, AARP Research.

Doctors point to the dangers to those who wait to have an exam when they experience vision loss. Many eye diseases may not offer obvious early warning signs, but they can be diagnosed during an exam and then treated to prevent further damage.

The AARP survey also revealed many primary care doctors are not routinely asking their patients about their vision: 58 percent of those who had regular medical checkups reported that their doctor failed to ask about their eye health.

**Vision loss affects an older adult’s overall health, risk of falling, social interactions, and quality of life.**

Vision care is rarely talked about during doctors’ visits, due to other medical issues taking priority, according to Dr. Preeti Malani, Director of the National Poll on Healthy Aging and a geriatrics specialist.

Dr. Malani says, “Adults often have a long list of health concerns to discuss with their primary care provider. Difficulties with vision might not always come to mind.”

IHSS consumers are encouraged to act as their own advocates during visits with their doctors. If you feel that your primary care doctor is not focusing on preventative care for you to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible, make them aware of this concern.

During your next visit with your doctor, ask about your vision health. All Medi-Cal members are eligible for a routine eye exam every two years, to check for eye health and test for eyeglass prescription needs.

To learn about programs that may be able to assist you with the cost of prescription eye glasses or contact lenses, call a Community Resource Specialist of Sourcewise: (408) 350-3200, option 1.



# National Caregiver Appreciation Month

By Shannin Prather

November is National Caregiver Appreciation Month and serves as an excellent reminder to honor the people who devote their time and resources to the service of others. The caregiver community is a truly inspiring group of people who are dedicated to assisting with the special needs of people with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) independent care providers help the most vulnerable in our community. Care providers may work long hours; perform daily, physically demanding tasks; and place the needs of others above themselves. In Santa Clara County, more than 24,200 individuals have chosen to assume this responsibility.

Being a care provider requires compassion, empathy, and willingness to adapt to the many challenges that can come up at a moment's notice.

This work requires strength and adaptability and is best suited for those who have a genuine passion for helping others. Care providers are committed to improving the quality of life for consumers across the IHSS program.

In November 2018, in honor of National Caregiver Appreciation Month, join Public Authority Services in finding opportunities to uplift the care providers you know; show gratitude for their efforts. These special individuals are dedicated to providing unwavering support and compassion to ensure their clients have the care and assistance they need to live each and every day. Such dedication and important work makes a difference in our community.



## Call Now to Register!

By Shannin Prather

Public Authority Services offers no-cost training and information sessions to IHSS consumers through monthly toll free conference calls. You are welcome to participate via telephone from the comfort of your home! The following topics are scheduled for upcoming Call and Connect sessions:

**November:** Diabetes Prevention

**February:** Preventing Falls

**March:** Finding, Hiring, and Managing Care Providers

**April:** Who Does What: IHSS, Social Workers, Care Providers, & Public Authority Services

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

If you have suggestions on topics for future Call and Connect Sessions that will be valuable to IHSS recipients, or wish to register for upcoming Call and Connect Sessions, please call the Public Authority Training Department: (408) 350-3220.

# Medicare and Medi-Cal for IHSS Recipients

By Marcelo Espiritu

Understanding how to get your health insurance to work for you can make a difference to how you feel each day. When you have Medicare and Medi-Cal, understanding your options can be confusing.

Sourcewise Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) Counselors are trained to help Medicare beneficiaries by providing information to help them make the best decision for them or their loved ones. HICAP Counselors complete demanding, ongoing training and are registered with the California Department of Aging.

**For all Medicare beneficiaries, the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) occurs from October 15–December 7, 2018.**

As of January 1, 2019 you will be able to make plan changes once per quarter between January and September and during the AEP. Changes take effect the first day of the next month; changes in the AEP take effect in January.

You can still change your Medi-Cal plan or add, switch, or drop a Cal MediConnect plan anytime of the year.

The ability to change plans more frequently than others may make you more attractive to health companies and insurance agents who want your business.

For all Medicare beneficiaries, the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) occurs from October 15–December 7, 2018. Use this time to check if your 2018 Medicare drug plan or Medicare Advantage HMO will meet your needs in 2019.

Protect yourself from unwanted healthcare changes by always asking, “If I sign this health plan application, will I be able to see my current doctors, and will I be able to keep the current services I receive?” If the answer is no, then find out why. Sourcewise HICAP can assist you with questions on this topic.

All In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) recipients are considered “Dual Eligible beneficiaries.” Dual eligible beneficiaries have been allowed to change drug or HMO plans any month of the year. This option will end in 2019.

Learn about Medicare and how Medicare and Medi-Cal work together by speaking with a Sourcewise HICAP counselor: (408) 350-3200, option 2.

## Understanding Your Authorized Services: Tasks are for the Consumer

By Shannin Prather

Many In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers live in a household with family members, friends, or housemates. In these living situations, lines may become blurred with the scope of work a care provider is authorized to complete.

For instance, if a consumer has been authorized for “Routine Laundry,” their care providers are only authorized to clean, fold, and put away the laundry belonging to that consumer. This task is to be completed for the IHSS consumer only.

Another example is the “Prepare Meals” service. Care providers are only expected to prepare food for the IHSS consumer for whom they work.

IHSS care providers are not obligated to perform tasks for anyone other than the consumer who has hired them, nor will care providers be paid by the IHSS program for doing so.

If you have questions about your authorized services, contact IHSS: (408) 792-1600.



# 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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