



# The Consumer Connection

Fall 2017

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



## Inside this Issue

Great News On IHSS Phone Wait Times!

IHSS Care Provider Appreciation

What IHSS Recipients Should Know About Medicare

Prevent and Reduce Prediabetes

Public Authority Registry Lists

Call and Connect Sessions

Understanding a Share of Cost on Your Case

Become a Dementia Friend

## Great News On IHSS Phone Wait Times!

By Tina Paskert, IHSS

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is pleased to announce participation in Santa Clara County's Unit-Based Team (UBT) program. UBT is a new way for agencies to make positive changes to better serve clients through a group of managers, supervisors and frontline staff working together to solve problems and improve performance and quality of service to the community they serve. Teams create a Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound (SMART) goal and, with the support of a sponsor and various community agencies, work together to brainstorm ideas and reach that goal.

The IHSS UBT launched with the team name of "The Wait Terminators", and created a SMART goal to address the phone wait time.

Specifically, to lower the phone wait time by 25% by October 31, 2017. The most obvious solution was allowing consumers, providers, and community partners to leave a voice mail. Callers no longer have to stay on hold to talk to a live person. They are able to leave a voicemail, with their name, case number, and reason for their call.

The voicemail will be transferred to the appropriate staff to address their IHSS questions and/or issues.

On August 4, 2017 the IHSS voicemail option went live and is now averaging 100 voicemails per day. With the voicemail option, IHSS has not only met the goal of reducing the phone wait times by 25%, the goal has been surpassed!

Participating in the UBT has allowed IHSS the opportunity to see what changes can be made to better serve clients and the community. With the success of the voicemail option IHSS is looking at even more program improvements including improving the website, making changes to the phone tree, and improving the lobby's purpose and use.

The next change will be a general email address available to use to communicate with IHSS. This is still in the planning stages and will go live in the near future.

To contact IHSS call (408) 792-1600 or FAX (408) 792-1601.

# IHSS Care Provider Appreciation

By Araceli Gaona

Working as an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) care provider can be extremely fulfilling for the individuals who are choosing to perform this vital work. IHSS care providers tirelessly 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.

IHSS care providers in Santa Clara County work more than 100 hours per month, on average, and roughly 4,300 providers work more than 160 hours per month. On average, a care provider may remain with their consumer for five to six years.

These numbers attest to what many already acknowledge: a solid commitment exists for care providers—both family and non-family—in this line of

work. 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 do not let a long challenging workday get them down; and who have a genuine passion for helping others. Care providers are committed to improving the quality of life for consumers across the IHSS program.

This November, in honor of National Caregivers Month, join Public Authority Services in giving a heartfelt **Thank You** to all care providers, especially the 23,150 IHSS care providers in Santa Clara County. These special individuals are dedicated to providing unwavering support and compassion to their clients; and they are deeply appreciated.

# What IHSS Recipients Should Know About Medicare

By Marcelo Espiritu

Stacks of mail advertising insurance plans for 2018 are arriving to your door this time of year. With so many choices available, how do you sort through all of this information?

As an IHSS recipient, you may currently have coverage with both Medicare and Medi-Cal. Health insurance plans can be complicated; and if you have coverage by two insurances, picking the best option for your unique needs can be confusing.

Every fall Medicare drug plan and Medicare Advantage HMOs provide updated information for your consideration. For most Medicare recipients, a change must be made before December 7. But, if you also have Medi-Cal, you can make changes to your plan at any time. You are not bound by the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (October 15—December 7). Instead, you have an ongoing Special Enrollment Period to make changes which would take effect on the first day of the next month after a change is made. Additionally, you

may also change your Medi-Cal plan throughout the year.

With the option to change plans anytime, your business is sought after by health insurance companies and agents. Protect yourself from unwanted healthcare changes by always asking, “If I sign this health plan application, will I be able to see my current physician/provider, and will I be able to retain the current services I receive?” If the answer is no, then find out why.

Would you like to know more about how Medicare and Medi-Cal work together? Receive personalized help from the Sourcewise Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP).

Counselors are registered with the California Department of Aging and provide free, objective, one-on-one counseling to assist individuals with Medicare options and questions. For assistance, call HICAP: (408) 350-3200, option 2.

# Prevent and Reduce Prediabetes

By Shannin Prather

A 2016 study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and California Center for Public Health Advocacy indicated that 46% of Santa Clara County adults are estimated to have prediabetes or undiagnosed diabetes.

Prediabetes is a condition where blood glucose levels rise higher than normal, leading to risks of developing diabetes, heart disease, and strokes. People with prediabetes may progress to type 2 diabetes.

The good news is that you can stop the progression from prediabetes to type 2 diabetes by making smart choices. Small changes such as eating healthy foods; adding physical activity to your daily routine; and maintaining a healthy weight can bring your blood sugar level back to normal.

Prediabetes affects adults as well as children. The lifestyle changes listed above can prevent progression to diabetes in adults and may also help children regain normal blood sugar levels.



**Small changes such as eating healthy foods; adding physical activity to your daily routine; and maintaining a healthy weight can bring your blood sugar level back to normal.**

Though the exact cause of prediabetes is unknown, certain factors increase a person's risk for developing diabetes. These include:

- Family history— a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- Race—African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders are more likely to develop prediabetes
- Age—the risk of prediabetes increases after age 45
- Weight—fatty tissue (especially around your abdomen) is more resistant to insulin
- Diet—eating processed or red meats and drinking beverages sweetened with sugar is associated with a higher risk of prediabetes

In most cases, type 2 diabetes develops gradually, making the symptoms hard to detect. The American Diabetes Association recommends a blood glucose screening for adults at age 45; earlier if you are overweight and have additional risk factors for type 2 diabetes. If you are over age 45, or have one or more of the above risks factors, talk to your doctor about getting a blood glucose screening.

A simple test is available to determine risk for prediabetes; visit [www.doihaveprediabetes.org](http://www.doihaveprediabetes.org)

# Public Authority Registry Lists

By Frank Ochoa

Public Authority (PA) Registry serves both Consumers and Independent Care Providers (IPs) of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. The Registry's highest responsibility is managing the 'list' or 'referral database'.

Using a customized computer program, staff members of the Registry maintain a database of enrolled IPs who are looking for employment with consumers. Of the nearly 44,000 IPs and consumers enrolled in the IHSS program in Santa Clara County, an estimated 500 care providers are currently listed in the PA Registry, with 1,200 consumers currently using the Registry to find and hire IPs.

PA Registry Specialists help consumers by providing a list of IP names or 'referrals'. Using a database designed to create a customized list for each consumer when they ask for one, the list filters IPs based on the consumer's needs, including: location, hours needed, and tasks required.

Care Providers are considered based on these (and other) factors:

- Available to work for more consumers
- Available during the consumer's preferred work schedule
- Able to commute to the consumer's area
- Willing to perform the tasks approved by IHSS and needed by the consumer (bathing, transfers, grooming, etc.)

- Willing to work in the consumer's home environment (smoking, pets in home, etc.)

With search filters in place, the list of 500 IP names can drastically drop to a smaller pool of 10-20 possible providers matching the consumer's needs. At times, the pool can drop even further, and be completely emptied, resulting in no available IPs.

Certain communities have a very small number of available IPs, including: Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mountain View, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill. These areas are located at the outer edges of the county. As large numbers of IPs live in central and east San Jose, IPs may not be willing to commute to areas which may be considered too far to travel. PA Registry and Training Specialists dedicate time and effort to recruit new IPs who live in these outer edge areas.

Finding the right care provider can be difficult. PA Registry Specialists help by using the database to create a screened list of candidates meeting the desired requirements. A consumer will interview an IP in person to decide on whether the match is a good fit. The PA Registry is available to help consumers with the process, and provide tips and guidance. The final screening and decision is made by the consumer.

## Call and Connect Sessions

By Shannin Prather

Public Authority Services offers no-cost training and information sessions to IHSS consumers through monthly 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:**

Self-Advocacy: Speaking Up For Your Needs

### **December:**

Protecting Yourself From Scams

### **January:**

Preventing Falls

### **February:**

Understanding your Medicare and Medi-Cal Benefits

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

We would love to hear your suggestions for topics that would be valuable to the IHSS recipient 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.

# Understanding a Share of Cost on Your Case

By IHSS staff

Some consumers of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) have a Share of Cost (SOC) for their services. Those with an SOC have a higher income than most individuals receiving SSI/Medi-Cal and, as a result, need to spend some of their monthly income for medical services before SSI/Medi-Cal benefits will pay.

Depending on the amount of income being received, you may be required to pay a certain amount each month before Medi-Cal will pay for services like IHSS. The SOC allows people with higher monthly incomes to receive IHSS if a part of the cost is paid by them directly. An SOC is similar to a private health plan's monthly deductible; the SOC is Medi-Cal's out of pocket deductible.

The SOC is usually paid to whichever Medi-Cal approved services are used first during the month. For example, if you have an SOC, you may need to pay out of pocket for your first medical appointment or the pharmacy before Medi-Cal begins to pay for the rest. Once your

IHSS provider has submitted their timesheet, the IHSS program will send a notice letting you know how much of your SOC has been met for the month and how much you will need to pay your IHSS provider as part of your SOC. Once Medi-Cal has determined that the SOC has been met for the month, the IHSS program (at the State level) will issue your IHSS provider a paycheck for the remaining amount owed.

If you have an SOC and believe it is too high, there are several Medi-Cal programs that can assist you in lowering or removing your SOC, such as:

- 250% Working Disabled Program
- Aged and Disabled Federal Poverty Level Program
- the Medi-Cal 1619b waiver
- the Medi-Cal Pickle Program

To find out if you qualify for any of these programs, contact your Medi-Cal Eligibility Worker at 1-877-962-3633 or email [BACCLericalPhoneSupport@ssa.sccgov.org](mailto:BACCLericalPhoneSupport@ssa.sccgov.org).

## Become a Dementia Friend

A global movement is changing the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. Dementia Friends USA was developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom, and is now an initiative in action throughout the United States.

In January 2017, Board of Supervisors President Dave Cortese became the first Dementia Friend in Santa Clara County. He then launched a campaign to encourage all community members to become a Dementia Friend.

Becoming a Dementia Friend is quick and easy. Participants of Dementia Friends USA watch a series of quick, online videos to learn about the challenges of living with dementia; then turn understanding into action.

To join the Dementia Friends movement:

- Log into [www.dementiafriendsusa.org](http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org)

- Watch the three minute, introductory video explaining the symptoms of dementia
- Watch three, one-minute online videos
- Choose 3 simple actions from a list. Examples include:
  - Encourage others to become Dementia Friends
  - Reach out and regularly connect with someone living with dementia
  - Commit to a personal action, such as being more patient with community members
- Provide your name, e-mail, and city
- Print your Dementia Friends Certificate

Help your fellow community members understand more about dementia and how it affects people. Each of us can make a difference in the lives of those touched by this difficult condition.



# 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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