



The Consumer Connection

Summer 2018

Public Authority Services
by Sourcewise



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Teach Self-Management for Autistic Wandering

By Shannin Prather

Wandering behaviors are common for seniors diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's disease. But did you know that children and adults with autism are also prone to wandering? With autism, this type of wandering is known as elopement, bolting, or running.

According to a 2012 study, when an opportunity arose, nearly 50% of children with autism wandered away from their safe environment or guardian. Tendencies to stray carry unique challenges for individuals with autism. Education about strategies to manage these behaviors will help keep safe those with autism.

The National Autism Association (NAA) reports that wandering is usually a form of communication, with the message being *'I need', 'I want', or 'I do not want.'* The wanderer is trying to move toward something of interest or move away from something bothersome.

The NAA offers tips for guardians or caregivers of individuals with autism to assist in teaching self-help techniques

to help autistic individuals manage wandering, which include:

- Identify triggers that could prompt fleeing, such as loud noise or bright lights. Teach the individual safe, alternative ways to respond.
- Use calming tools such as noise-cancelling headphones or weighted blankets. Teach calming techniques using favorite topics or items.
- Enroll in swimming lessons with the final lessons done with clothes and shoes on.
- Demonstrate safety by sharing social stories to teach individuals ways to stay safe. Use favorite objects or

tools to show outside time versus inside time.

Autism Speaks, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has partnered with Twigtale to develop teaching

stories which you can personalize to teach autistic individuals about safety. Learn more at www.autismspeaks.org.

Access additional tips and resources on autism and wandering behaviors at www.nationalautismassociation.org.

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Independent Care Providers Now Accrue Paid Sick Leave

By Shannin Prather

Effective July 1, 2018 In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Independent Care Providers (IPs) began accruing (earning) paid sick leave hours. Once your IPs have been paid for 100 hours of IHSS work they will have accrued eight hours of paid sick leave.

IPs will be able to use their earned sick leave once they have met the following eligibility criteria, whichever comes first:

IPs must be paid for working an additional 200 hours or IPs must have worked 60 calendar days. Once either of the two options are met, an IP is then able to use paid sick leave hours.

It is important for IPs to let their consumers know as soon possible when they will be using paid sick leave so consumers avoid going without care. An IP using their sick leave hours will not affect a consumer's Monthly Authorized Hours. Consumers can ask a back-up provider to temporarily work in their regular IPs place.

If you need an IP who can fill the role of a back-up for you, you can contact the Public Authority Services Registry for help by calling (408) 350-3251.

If you have questions about the new Sick Leave policy, contact IHSS: (408) 792-1600.



New Medicare Cards

Starting in June 2018, new Medicare cards began arriving in the mailboxes of Medicare beneficiaries. The new cards have a slightly different design; and a new Medicare number which is unique to each recipient.

If you have not yet received your new card, you may want to verify that your address is correct in the Medicare system. If your address is correct, you do not need to take any further action. Your new card will be sent automatically.

Once you receive your new Medicare card, destroy the old card and immediately begin using the new card.

Medicare will never call you to ask for your personal, confidential information. If you receive a telephone call requesting personal information, it is likely a scam. DO NOT give out your personal information. Hang up, and call Medicare to report the incident.



Learn more about the new Medicare cards at www.medicare.gov/newcard/ or call Medicare: (800) 633-4227.

Invisible Disabilities Among Us

By Shannin Prather

While many disabilities are immediately apparent (especially if someone relies on a wheelchair or a cane), many are not visible. People living with invisible disabilities face particular challenges within their communities.

An invisible disability refers to symptoms such as immense pain, exhaustion, dizziness, cognitive issues, brain injuries, learning differences, mental health disorders, hearing loss, and visual impairments. Symptoms are not always obvious at a glance, but these conditions may severely limit daily activities. Invisible symptoms often lead to misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments by people who are not familiar with the impact of an unseen condition.

When a disability is not immediately obvious, others—at work, school, stores, or even at home—may sometimes doubt its existence; and perhaps think the person is simply angling for special treatment or even exaggerating. Unfortunately, people often judge others by what they see and make incorrect conclusions about a person's abilities based on the way they look.

In "Disabilities are Not Always Obvious," *The Guardian*, Nia Sims writes "...many of my friends have told me of being abused (verbally or via notes left on their cars) by strangers when using an accessible (or "disabled") parking space...These are friends who have a disability parking permit clearly displayed... but what they fail to display is a disability that is immediately apparent to others."

An estimated 10% of the U.S. population suffers from an invisible disability. These individuals may appear healthy while they are inwardly fighting a difficult illness. Many individuals may have both an invisible illness and a visible disability. For example, a person who is paralyzed may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Invisible illnesses may not be treated seriously; as they may be neglected or misunderstood.

Find help if you are having difficulties with an invisible disability. Organizations offer peer support; education; reduced stigma; and supportive understanding to help you successfully manage your challenges.

Online communities, such as Invisible Disability Project, offer a platform to share your stories and promote awareness. In their *Unseen Zine Blog*, guest contributor Haley Zilberberg writes "I have always attached shame to my disability...Invisible Disability Project gave me the platform to voice my experiences as a person with invisible disabilities in a positive way that makes me feel powerful..."

Learn more by visiting Invisible Disability Project: www.invisibledisabilityproject.org; the Invisible Disabilities Association: <https://invisibledisabilities.org>; or call a Community Resources Specialist of Sourcewise: (408) 350-3200, option 1.

Community Resource Highlight: Bay Area Older Adults

Bay Area Older Adults™ is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization that offers outdoor, social and cultural activities for adults age 50+. Membership is FREE and gives you member-only discounts, special offers and a monthly newsletter of group events.

The organization's mission is to stimulate the hearts, bodies and minds of older adults through easy access to arts and culture, nature and new friends. Join members for outings and classes, and access their resources by visiting www.bayareaolderadults.org.



Changes to IHSS In-Home Assessment Guidelines

By Shannin Prather

For many years In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Social Workers have used Time-Per-Task (TPT) and Frequency Guidelines when completing in-home assessments to determine the services and number of hours to authorize individual consumers.

Social Workers used TPT guidelines to gather information about the types of daily tasks a consumer needs help with each day, and how often help is needed. For instance, if a consumer needs help getting into or out of a chair, how many times each day is help needed? Most people don't count the number of times per day they get in or out of a chair, and many times the consumer would make a guess. Unfortunately, this type of assessment often led to an incorrect number of authorized hours.

IHSS no longer uses TPT guidelines when doing intake assessments or annual reassessments. As of December 2017, IHSS Social Workers have switched to Functional Index Rankings and Hourly Task Guidelines (HTG) which are standardized and reasonable.

HTG help Social Workers assign each consumer a rank based on the level of care needed; and use the standard range of hours to assign tasks and

times within that ranking. Social Workers are able to consider individual needs and circumstances when doing assessments and assigning hours.

The system ranks consumers within one of six categories:

Rank 1: The Consumer is independent and able to take care of most tasks without human assistance.

Rank 2: The Consumer is able to take care of most tasks but needs verbal assistance, such as being reminded, guided, or encouraged.

Rank 3: The Consumer is able to take care of tasks with some human assistance, including (but, not limited to) direct physical help from a care provider.

Rank 4: The Consumer is able to take care of tasks only with a lot of human help.

Rank 5: The Consumer cannot perform most tasks, with or without human assistance.

Rank 6: The Consumer needs paramedical services (prescribed by a health care professional).

Learn more about the new assessment guidelines by asking your Social Worker during your next assessment; viewing the IHSS Fact Sheets online at www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/IHSS/Fact-Sheets; or by contacting IHSS at (408) 792-1600.

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:

August: Preventing Falls

September: Understanding Care Provider Sick Leave

October: Planning and Managing Care Provider Hours Month to Month

November: Diabetes Prevention

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.

Finding the Resources You Need

By Shannin Prather

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), one in three Americans aged 65 or older lacks resources needed to meet basic food, housing, and medical needs. Millions of low-income seniors and adults with disabilities qualify for—but are not yet enrolled in—programs that could help pay for prescription drugs, medical care, food, or utilities for their homes.

Nationally, an estimated 2 million individuals who are eligible for the Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) are not enrolled in the program. In 2016, only 60% of those eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) actually participated in the program, leaving eligible participants without access to benefits for food.

Organizations can help you connect with programs or benefits for which you may be eligible.

Sourcewise, Santa Clara County's Area Agency on Aging, can provide you with eligibility information to

connect you with programs and services enhancing a safe, healthy life. Sourcewise Community Resource Specialists work with you to provide information and referrals for support services that may benefit you. An online Resource Connection is also available at www.mysourcewise.com. Call to speak with a Community Resource Specialist: (408) 350-3200, option 1.

Another free online service, NCOA's BenefitsCheckUp® helps seniors with limited incomes learn which benefits they may be eligible to receive to assist with costs for: medicine, rent, and utilities. Visit the website for BenefitsCheckUp®: www.benefitscheckup.org.

2-1-1 is a free, confidential service helping people nationwide to find local resources, information, and support; whether assistance is financial, domestic, health, or disaster related. Contact a specialist to determine which health and human services are available in your area. Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org.

Understanding Your Authorized Services: Assistance with Prosthesis/Meds

By Jacky Topete

Each In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) recipient has an approved number of hours and list of approved services to accommodate their specific needs. One service that may be difficult to understand is Assistance with Prosthesis/Meds, also known as Care and Assistance with Prosthesis.

Care and Assistance with Prosthesis services are defined as:

- Helping with prosthetic devices
- Helping consumers to self-administer (give themselves) their medications.

Consumers with prosthetic devices may be authorized for help. Devices may include hearing aids or artificial limbs. Service may be authorized to help with addition or removal of a prosthetic device; maintenance of a device (such as changing a battery on a hearing aid); and cleaning a device.

IHSS consumers may need help with prescribed or over-the-counter medications. Under this service the Independent Care Provider (IP) is authorized to remind the consumer to take their medications on time, and to keep a log of medications and the times that they were taken.

IPs must take care when helping with medications. IPs cannot physically place medications in the consumer's body (such as through the mouth or via injection) unless the consumer has also been authorized for Paramedical Services, and the IP has been trained to correctly administer medications. IPs without proper training may be held responsible if something goes wrong.

If you have questions about your authorized services or your situation has changed and you need to be reassessed by your Social Worker, please contact IHSS: (408) 792-1600.



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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