



# The Consumer Connection

Fall 2020

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Paper Timesheets End November 16, 2020

By Shannin Prather

New federal laws are bringing an end to paper timesheets for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) care providers. IHSS recipients must approve care provider timesheets via telephone by using the Telephone Timesheet System (TTS) or online through the Electronic Services Portal (ESP) using a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

For care providers to receive pay, **IHSS recipients are required to use the ESP or TTS systems** to review and approve or reject timesheets. **Beginning November 16, 2020, Santa Clara County will no longer be using paper timesheets.** If you and your provider are not enrolled in either TTS or ESP by November 16, Santa Clara County will automatically enroll you and your provider in TTS.

Using the ESP is a convenient and simple way to review care provider timesheets. The TTS allows blind and visually impaired persons, or persons with no internet access, the ability to approve timesheets over the phone.

To register for the TTS, call (833) DIAL-EVV or (833) 342-5388 and provide your seven-digit case number. You will need to create a four-digit passcode, which you will use to verify your identity each time you approve care provider timesheets, so choose a number you will remember easily.

After registering for the TTS, you will start to receive automated telephone calls each time your care provider(s) submit an electronic timesheet. Once the system verifies your identity with your case number and passcode, it will prompt you through the process of reviewing the timesheet to approve or reject it. If you are not able to answer the phone when the TTS system tries to reach you, you can approve timesheets by calling TTS back during business hours at (833) 342-5388.

You can contact the IHSS Services Desk for assistance with TTS. To speak with a live person, contact the help desk from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays: 1 (866) 376-7066.

# IHSS Operations During Shelter-in-Place

By Terri Possley, IHSS Santa Clara County Program Manager

For safety reasons, almost all In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) staff are working remotely from home, including phone agents, payroll, application readiness, social workers, supervisors, and managers. To process paperwork mailed to the IHSS office, staff come in from time-to-time on a rotating schedule. Staff meetings are held via Skype, Zoom, and telephone. As of now, there is no scheduled date for IHSS staff to return to the office building full time.

The IHSS lobby is closed to the public and signs are posted in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese, instructing IHSS care providers and care recipients to either enroll in Electronic Timesheets at [www.etimesheets.ihss.ca.gov](http://www.etimesheets.ihss.ca.gov) or to call the main telephone line for assistance: (408) 792-1600.

On July 6, 2020, the State extended the flexibility to allow social workers to conduct annual reassessments via telephone and videoconferencing through December 31, 2020.

As of August 4, 2020, intake assessments for new applicants are being conducted face-to-face. If the applicant has been exposed to COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 within the two weeks prior, an intake assessment may be conducted via videoconference.

Social workers will complete the majority of each intake assessment via telephone prior to the face-to-face contact in the care recipient's home. Social workers will wear Personal Protective Equipment, such as masks, for the home visit portion of the intake assessment.

Effective August 3, 2020, IHSS is required to notify contact tracers of any care recipients and care providers who have tested positive for COVID-19.

IHSS staff would like to thank all care recipients and care providers in Santa Clara County for your continued understanding, cooperation, and support during these difficult times. Our priority is keeping all of you and our staff safe and healthy.

# Easier Voting Access for Seniors and Disabled Individuals

By Shannin Prather

Getting to the polls to vote can be challenging for some seniors and individuals with disabilities, especially for those who have limited resources or mobility. These challenges may lead some to stay home and not vote in the 2020 Presidential Election. The additional risks posed by the COVID-19 virus make voting in this year's election even more concerning.

However, in Santa Clara County, all registered voters were mailed a Vote by Mail ballot in October. Voters can choose to either vote in person, as usual, or can use the Vote by Mail ballot to cast their vote in three different ways, depending on personal preferences:

1. Send the completed and signed ballot through mail
2. Drop the completed and signed ballot in ANY official Ballot Drop Box location
3. Turn in the completed and signed ballot at ANY Santa Clara County Vote Center

Voting by mail enables you to send in your ballot early and does not require postage. The Vote by Mail ballot return envelope must be postmarked on or before Election Day, November 3.

For more information on ballot submission, tracking your mailed ballot to know if it has been counted, or a list of Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations, visit [sccvote.org/voterschoice](http://sccvote.org/voterschoice).

# Virtual Classes Provide Connection for Seniors

By Shannin Prather

With the COVID-19 pandemic making in-person interactions more difficult, taking a virtual class or two via internet, also known as “e-learning,” is the next best thing to being there in person. Participants can learn new languages, take virtual museum and zoo tours, participate in art classes, and more.

“Learning new skills through virtual classes can help to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression and help improve one’s mood and feelings of well-being.” says Susan McInerney, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at a senior living community in Southern California. She also adds, “Older adults should continue to find new challenges.”

**“Learning new skills through virtual classes can help to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression and help improve one’s mood and feelings of well-being.”**

According to McInerney, physical activity is also beneficial in improving one’s mood. Even light exercise promotes changes in the brain, including neural growth, reduced inflammation, and new activity patterns that promote feelings of calm and well-being. Fortunately, a wide variety of online exercise classes are available for all skill levels.

Several studies, such as a 2019 preliminary study conducted at the University of Hong Kong, have shown that when older adults learn a new language, game, or technology, it strengthens connections within the brain and helps to prevent memory loss.

Aside from enrolling in online courses offered by universities, which may be costly, there are multiple ways in which seniors can pursue lifelong learning.

For those who do not have access to the internet or do not feel comfortable navigating online, there are programs, such as Well Connected by Covia, that give seniors the opportunity to join educational or recreational group telephone calls for free. Learn more about Well Connected by calling (925) 956-7400.

There are many platforms for e-learning these days, which can be accessed with a computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone. Search for subjects of interest, such as “beginner yoga,” “guitar lessons,” or “basic computer use,” on Youtube.com and find several videos to watch for free.

Learn to speak a new language, free of cost, on [duolingo.com](https://www.duolingo.com) or try [Babbel.com](https://www.babbel.com) to learn to speak, read, and write in a new language.



Lectures from acclaimed schools, such as Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), are also available to watch, at no cost, at [academicearth.org](https://www.academicearth.org).

Whether it is learning about Medicare Part D or tracing family genealogy, the desire to acquire new knowledge exists throughout one’s lifespan and is critical for adults who want to stay up-to-date in a changing world. Whether in arts and culture, history, computer use, music, health, or whatever the field of interest is, there is sure to be an online course for it.

# Medicare Open Enrollment for 2021 Coverage

By Margaret Kinoshita, HICAP

The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) opened October 15 and will last through December 7, 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Sourcewise Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) counselors are adapting to serve Santa Clara County resident's needs during COVID-19.



During AEP, existing Medicare beneficiaries may enroll into, change, or drop a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan or a Medicare Part C HMO plan. HICAP counselors can help you review Medicare Part D prescription drug plan costs and formulary changes, identify options available for Part C Medicare Advantage Plans (HMOs), and identify other ways to supplement Medicare for the upcoming 2021 year.

To keep clients safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, HICAP will provide AEP Medicare counseling services remotely either by phone or video conference, when possible. Before speaking with a HICAP counselor about your options, be prepared and sign up for a MyMedicare.gov account. You will gain access to a personalized Medicare Plan Finder Tool that shows your unique list of medications.

**HICAP counselors can help you sort through the different options to find the best plans for you or your loved one. HICAP will host AEP presentations called Medicare's 2020 Annual Enrollment Period and Updates for 2021 via Zoom to keep you informed of the latest plan options and changes for 2021.**

HICAP counselors can help you sort through the different options to find the best plans for you or your loved one. HICAP will host AEP presentations called *Medicare's 2020 Annual Enrollment Period and Updates for 2021* via Zoom to keep you informed of the latest plan options and changes for 2021.

Sourcewise HICAP provides financial application assistance for Medicare beneficiaries who want to sign up for the Low-Income Subsidy (also called "Extra Help"). It is available for Medicare beneficiaries who have incomes less than \$2,155 each month for

couples and \$1,595 each month for singles; whose savings or assets are less than \$29,160 and \$14,610 respectively. If you are still working, the income limits can be higher since roughly half a person's earned income is not counted.

HICAP counseling is free, unbiased, and available to Medicare eligible Santa Clara County residents. To attend a *Medicare's 2020 Annual Enrollment Period and Updates for 2021* presentation or to schedule a one-on-one counseling session with a HICAP counselor, call (408) 350-3200, option 2 or visit the Sourcewise website at [mysourcewise.com/calendar](https://mysourcewise.com/calendar).

# History of IHSS and Public Authority

By Beverly Lozoff and Janie Whiteford, IHSS Advisory Board

In the 1950s, the State of California provided in-home care through a program that gave grants to eligible consumers who hired and paid care providers. In the early 1970s, a second program allowed those consumers who could not supervise their caregivers to receive services from persons employed by the County.

Shortly thereafter, the State mandated local County control of these programs and provided funding. In 1979, State legislation identified the consumer as an employer and the State as responsible for payments and related issues. This was the beginning of our current In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program.

The IHSS program is designed to assist the elderly, blind, and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes when they are no longer able to fully care for themselves or handle routine household tasks. The program pays for a wide variety of services such as household chores and personal care, enabling individuals to live safely at home while encouraging independence and rehabilitation where possible. IHSS is an alternative to out-of-home care/institutional placement.

Initially, IHSS was primarily a program to pay relatives for providing care to their family members. The program quickly grew, and its focus changed to prevent premature

institutionalization. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, advocates for seniors and persons with disabilities successfully joined with labor and local government to secure the passage of legislation that allowed Counties to set up public authorities, or nonprofit consortiums. A registry was established to help consumers find care providers, investigate the background and qualifications of care providers, offer training, and serve as the employer of record for collective bargaining. To ensure a strong consumer voice and consumer-majority governing, advisory boards were mandated.

The Governing Body that oversees the Advisory Board in Santa Clara County is the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. They appointed an 11-member Board that meets monthly to make recommendations on service enhancements and IHSS operations. The Board also advocates on behalf of consumers on all issues relating to IHSS and Personal Care Assistance in the County. At least 50% of Advisory Board members are current or past users of personal assistance services.

[The Advisory Board is the voice of the consumer, and you are invited to attend the monthly meetings—currently via Zoom. All meetings are open to the public. If you would like to join a meeting or have questions about IHSS, reach out to the Advisory Board by calling \(408\) 350-3286.](#)

# IHSS Care Provider Appreciation

By Shannin Prather

November is designated as National Caregiver Appreciation Month, and it serves as an excellent reminder to honor the people who devote their time and resources to the service of others. The caregiver community is truly an 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) care providers help the most vulnerable in our community. IHSS care providers may work long

hours, perform physically demanding tasks daily, and place the needs of others above themselves. In Santa Clara County, there are more than 27,000 individuals who have chosen to assume this responsibility.

This November, in honor of National Caregivers Appreciation Month, join Public Authority Services by Sourcewise in finding opportunities to uplift the care providers we know and show them gratitude for their efforts.



# 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, bus 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**

## Members of the Public Authority Advisory Board

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