



The Consumer Connection

Spring 2021

Public Authority Services
by Sourcewise



Inside this Issue

COVID-19 Vaccine Data Very Positive

Health and Safety Spring Cleaning Guide

Build Care Provider Skills

Staying Connected During the Pandemic

Emergency Back-up Registry for COVID-19

Masks and Gloves Available for the IHSS Population

COVID-19 Vaccine Medicare Fraud Alert

Your Opinion Matters as an IHSS Advocate

Older Adults Can Benefit from Digital Technology

COVID-19 Vaccine Data Very Positive

By Shannin Prather

Data gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests a full dose of an approved Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine—with the proper waiting period after vaccination—can effectively eliminate risk of COVID-19 related death, nearly eliminates the risk of hospitalization, and drastically reduces a person's ability to infect others.



As more individuals receive the vaccination, the spread of the deadly virus is slowing. According to the Mayo Clinic, this may also help prevent the virus from mutating into more vaccine-resistant strains.

A study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (2020) found that the Pfizer vaccine can start protecting you as soon as 12 days after the first shot. After receiving both doses of the vaccine, it takes about two weeks to build up complete protection against the virus.

Public health officials are urging people who have been vaccinated to continue to follow pandemic precautions for the time being. Even if a person has received the vaccine, there is still a health risk to unvaccinated family and friends. Until most of the population receives a vaccine, vaccinated people should continue to wear masks, maintain social distancing, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, maintain good hand hygiene, and stay home when sick.

To schedule a vaccination appointment through the county's Health & Hospital system, visit vax.sccgov.org.

As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination reduces the spread of the disease, the CDC will update recommendations to protect communities. Learn more at cdc.gov/coronavirus.

For up-to-date local information on the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the Santa Clara County Public Health Department's website at sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/phd.aspx.

Health and Safety Spring Cleaning Guide

By Shannin Prather

According to Psychology Today (2018), clutter can increase stress by distracting us and overwhelming our senses.

Spring cleaning not only makes your living environment look and feel more organized, but it can also improve your health by ridding your home of allergens and dangerous hazards that may have built up over the cold winter months.

A cluttered home could pose health and safety risks. A cluttered living room with closely placed pieces of furniture could pose a trip and fall hazard. Blocked pathways and doorways in one's home can reduce mobility for those using canes, walkers, or wheelchairs. When doorways are blocked, medical responders may be unable to enter the home during an emergency.

Take your time with your spring cleaning and do not lift or move heavy items on your own. Stay safe by asking for help when you need it.

Some simple tips for decluttering that will not only make your personal space feel more organized, but also create a safer environment:

- Focus on one room at a time.
- Clear out clutter; go through each room and determine what can be discarded, donated, or stored away.

- In bedrooms and common areas, dust furniture and sweep or vacuum floors.
- Wash bedding and any decorative cloths that may be on dressers or tables. Put away extra blankets that may have been out for the cold months.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to test they are working.
- Change air filters in furnaces, space heaters, and air conditioners as these could be clogged with dust and allergens.
- Check kitchen cabinets and the refrigerator for expired foods and clean up any crumbs or spills.
- Check medicine cabinets for expired prescription and over-the-counter medicines. These should be disposed of carefully. Call your doctor or local pharmacy for disposal options.

All households should have an emergency plan and a prepared disaster kit in case of a natural disaster. If you have your plan and kit in place, check it for expired foods and dead batteries. If not, take this opportunity to begin your emergency preparedness plan.

To learn more about creating an emergency plan and building a kit, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

Build Care Provider Skills

By Shannin Prather



Public Authority Services has added a new training resource to our website to help care providers build their skills. This new training resource consists of several educational videos, which can be accessed and viewed at any time. Many of the videos are available in English, Spanish and Mandarin.

These educational videos are not a part of the Public Authority Services training curriculum. However, they do contain very useful information and quick tips that can be helpful in building caregiver skills when providers are unable to attend regular training classes.

Explore the Care Provider Skills videos by visiting the training page at [pascc.org](https://www.pascc.org).

Staying Connected During the Pandemic

By Mariah Martinez

While social distancing has helped slow the spread of COVID-19, there is no surprise that it has led to increased feelings of loneliness, especially for older adults. According to a report done by AARP (2020), more than 50 percent of adults aged 50 years and older reported feelings of social isolation—absence of meaningful social relationships—during the pandemic.

Social isolation can impact mental health and lead to anxiety, depression, lack of motivation, and general feelings of sadness. Social isolation can also greatly affect physical health which may result in heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.

Although staying safe during the pandemic means limited in-person interactions with your family and friends, there are many ways to combat social isolation and stay mentally and physically healthy.

Keep connected with friends and family by:

- Sending letters in the mail
- Giving a loved one a phone call
- Video chatting over devices that have a camera (phone, laptop, etc.)

Keep connected with the community by:

- Calling the Institute on Aging's (IOA) Friendship line at 1 (888) 670-1360 to chat with an IOA Friendship line volunteer.
- Calling AARP's Friendly Voice program at 1 (888) 281-0145. Leave your information over voicemail and a volunteer will call you back for a friendly conversation.
- Reaching out to the Foundation for Art and Healing for creative arts activities via phone tailored towards older adults. Learn more at artandhealing.org/reflect-connect-calls/.
- Calling Papa Health at 1 (800) 348-7951 to connect with a "papa pal" who can provide companionship and technical assistance over the phone.
- Building new friendships on SeniorChatters in safe online chatrooms with adults over 50 years of age. To register or learn more, visit seniorchatters.co.uk/.
- Visiting celadonbooks.com/online-book-clubs/ for five virtual book clubs you can join.

Take the [social isolation risk quiz at connect2affect.org/](http://connect2affect.org/) and find out more ways to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Emergency Back-up Registry for COVID-19

By Sergio Serna

The Public Authority Registry launched an Emergency Back-up Registry (EBR) to assist In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers who have lost their regular IHSS care provider due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EBR differs from the standard Registry by focusing solely on consumers who need to hire a new care provider because they have either been exposed to COVID-19 or infected by COVID-19, or because the care provider had to stop working for other reasons related to the pandemic, such as not having access to childcare while sheltering-in-place.

An EBR Intake Coordinator is available to answer the phone and assess your situation seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To learn if your situation qualifies for assistance through the EBR, call (408) 722-8853.

Masks and Gloves Available for the IHSS Population

By Shannin Prather

The State of California has made a limited amount of Emergency Protective Gear (EPG) available to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers and care providers to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). While EPG supplies last, consumers and providers can request a small number of masks and gloves be mailed to them by Public Authority Services.

Due to limited supply, the size of gloves you prefer may not be available, but Public Authority Services will attempt to meet submitted requests. To qualify for the EPG, consumers and providers must be active in the IHSS system.



To learn more and request EPG supplies, visit the Public Authority Services COVID-19 information page at pascc.org/services/covid19.html.

COVID-19 Vaccine Medicare Fraud Alert

By Shannin Prather

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services are warning the public about scammers using the public's interest in COVID-19 vaccines to obtain personal information and money through various schemes.

You cannot pay to put your name on a waiting list to get the vaccine or get early access to the vaccine. Do not share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you, promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

Medicare and Medi-Cal cover COVID-19 vaccines at no cost. If anyone contacts you and asks you to share your Medicare or Medi-Cal number, or to pay for access to the vaccine, it is a guaranteed scam.

Learn more about protecting yourself from Medicare fraud on the Forms, Help, & Resources page at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).

If you believe you have been the victim of a COVID-19 fraud, report it to the FBI by calling (800) 225-5324. To learn more on how to protect yourself from these scams, visit [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov) or [tips.fbi.gov](https://www.tips.fbi.gov).

You cannot pay to put your name on a waiting list to get the vaccine or get early access to the vaccine. Do not share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you, promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

Your Opinion Matters as an IHSS Advocate

By Beverly Lozoff, IHSS Advisory Board Chair

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Board is a state-mandated group of volunteers appointed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to provide ongoing advice and recommendations about IHSS.

There are several openings on the Advisory Board. As a consumer of IHSS services, you have the opportunity to bring your concerns and ideas on making service delivery better for all consumers. If you are interested in learning more about the Advisory Board, you can attend one of the scheduled monthly meetings.

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month from 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. and are open to the public. Currently, the meetings are held virtually via Zoom.

For more information, please contact Public Authority Services at (408) 350-3286.

Older Adults Can Benefit from Digital Technology

By Shannin Prather

Whether with a computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone, smart television, smartwatch, or digital home assistant like Alexa and Google Home, you are surrounded by new methods of accessing information. What does it all mean and how do you use it?

Using and understanding technology may feel challenging to those who have gone most of their lives without it. It can be easy for some to become tech-savvy once you start to learn more about the technology around you. More seniors than ever before have adopted smartphones. According to Pew Research Center, 42 percent of adults over 65 say they feel confident using smartphones to access the internet.

Older adults should not underestimate how helpful technology can be. Whether you want to learn how to use email, find answers to questions, schedule appointments, do video calls with health professionals or loved ones, or view and share photos with friends and family, it is easier than you may think.

Getting digital literacy training can give you the skills and confidence to access information and services online on any device. If you do not have

a family member or friend to show you some computer basics, there are several computer literacy training choices that offer technology lessons and instructional videos that give you the flexibility to go at your own pace.

GCFLearnFree.org is free of charge and has tutorials on subjects ranging from different types of computers, to using email and internet searching, to online safety and cybersecurity. There are also in-person training classes available, as pandemic precautions allow, at many locations within Santa Clara County, including public libraries, community and senior centers, and adult schools. To learn more about computer training in your area, dial 211 on your phone or visit 211bayarea.org.

If you do not have access to a device or the internet, there are programs that may be able to provide you with either a low-cost or free computer, smartphone, or low-cost internet service.

To find out about these programs, contact 211 or speak with a Community Resource Specialist with Sourcewise by calling (408) 350-3500, option 1.



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, 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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