



# The Consumer Connection

Summer 2021

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Text 9-1-1 in Emergencies When Calling is Impossible

By Shannin Prather

Calling 9-1-1 in an emergency is the preferred and fastest way to request police, fire, or medical assistance. However, if a person in distress during an emergency cannot call or speak to a dispatcher, texting is another option to get help.

Text to 9-1-1 is intended primarily for use in three emergency situations:

- For an individual who is deaf, hard-of-hearing or has a speech disability
- For someone who is in a situation where it is not safe to place a voice call to 9-1-1
- For a medical emergency that renders the person incapable of speech

How to text 9-1-1 in an emergency:

1. Enter the numbers 911 (no dashes or spaces) in the “To” field
2. The first text message to 9-1-1 should be brief. Include an address, city, and type of emergency (police, fire or medical)
3. Push the “Send” button
4. Be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the Public Safety Dispatcher
5. Text in simple words - do not use abbreviations
6. Keep text messages brief and concise

Keep in mind that dispatchers cannot track your location when you use a cell phone to communicate with 9-1-1. It is very important to know the address of your emergency or that you describe the location using streets and landmarks, such as “the parking lot of Safeway on Hamilton Avenue, by Citibank.”

# Letter from the Advisory Board

By Janie Whiteford, Advisory Board Chair

Dear Consumers, Family Members, and Supporters;

My name is Janie Whiteford, Chair of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Board in Santa Clara County (SCC). We take our State mandated duty very seriously and meet monthly to give recommendations to any entity involved in the functioning of IHSS.

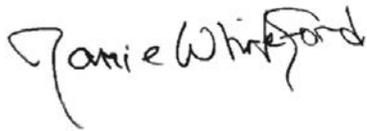
The Advisory Board has been concerned about the lack of an adequate number of care providers to help IHSS consumers. This is a Statewide problem and has been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. Your SCC Advisory Board is partnering with other organizations to explore ways to alleviate this stressful situation.

We are also keeping a watchful eye on the implication of Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) and hoping to keep it as unobtrusive as possible.

We encourage anyone interested in our work to join us. We welcome your concerns, success stories, and input on IHSS. We currently meet via Zoom and telephone if you would like to participate.

For information on how you can participate, please contact Public Authority Services at (408) 350-3206.

Sincerely,  
Janie Whiteford



## Connect with the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

On May 12, 2021, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to support low-income households struggling to afford internet services. Access to the internet can help households connect to jobs, healthcare services, virtual classrooms, and more.

This Emergency Broadband Benefit program is a temporary program to support low-income households during the Covid-19 pandemic. The program provides eligible households with a discount up to \$50 per month for broadband internet service. Eligible households are also offered a one-time discount up to \$100 on a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers.

Learn more about eligibility and how to apply for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program by visiting [fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit](https://fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit) or by contacting your preferred broadband provider to learn about their application process. A list of participating broadband providers is available in the link above.

# The Registry Helps IHSS Consumers Connect with Caregivers

By Samantha Powell and Shannin Prather

The Public Authority Registry assists In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers connect with and hire available care providers. Registry Services are provided in several different ways to meet different levels of needs.

The main service is the Registry itself, which maintains a database of care providers available to be hired by IHSS consumers.

The Registry uses technology to build lists of providers whose skills and available work schedule match the individual needs and preferences of the consumer. Through this program, the consumer is empowered to contact, interview, and hire care providers of their choosing.

For consumers who are unable to perform the tasks needed to complete the hiring process on their own, the Care Coaching Program may be able to assist. Social workers, case managers, and medical professionals can refer a consumer to the Care Coaching Program, which will assess the situation and can pair the consumer with a Care Coordinator who will guide the consumer through the process of finding and hiring a provider. Care Coordinators also refer consumers to additional resources to support the consumer's independence.

Many IHSS consumers are assisted through the program every month, such as Greg. In Early 2021, Greg was discharged from a skilled nursing facility and needed caregiving services to live independently. Mistakenly, Greg's Social Security did not reflect the change when he was discharged. As a result, Greg was not receiving his expected monthly income to pay rent and was at risk of being evicted. Navigating resources to fix the



situation was not possible for Greg to do on his own, as he is hearing impaired.

The Care Coaching program connected him with Care Coordinator Samantha Powell, who was able to help Greg hire IHSS care provider Caroline. Caroline went above and beyond expectations by assisting Greg to solve the issues with his Social Security and has become an advocate for

Greg during medical appointments and in communicating with various resources.

Of Caroline, Greg says “...I trust her to the fullest. Caroline is a very good caregiver and person...She is very good at what she does and helps me out a lot being that I cannot hear.”

The Care Coaching program has also been able to assist Greg in connecting with case management services and the Institute on Aging, who helped install safety equipment in his home.

Additional services offered by the Registry include the Urgent Care Registry for consumers who have an urgent need for personal care services and unexpectedly find themselves without care due to care provider absence and the Emergency Back-Up Registry for consumers who lost their care provider due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

[For more information on the Registry or other services and resources available through Public Authority Services, visit \[pascc.org\]\(https://pascc.org\).](#)

[If you would like to share your own success story about using the services offered by the Public Authority Registry, you can send an email to \[paregistry@pascc.org\]\(mailto:paregistry@pascc.org\).](#)

# Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

By Jacklyn Topete

July is Minority Mental Health Awareness month. Research and understanding about mental health diagnoses and treatments have greatly evolved in the last 20 years and the amount of disorders diagnosed by mental health professionals is increasing rapidly. However, minorities face additional barriers and challenges in receiving proper diagnoses and treatments.



According to the American Psychological Association, two out of every five individuals will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder (including addiction) in their lifetime. Although mental health disorders are now considered more common, it is important to recognize that mental health challenges affect individuals regardless of age, sex, religion or culture.

**It is critical to acknowledge that an individual's perception of their mental health diagnosis, as well as the resources available to them, are often dependent on their cultural background and upbringing.**

It is critical to acknowledge that an individual's perception of their mental health diagnosis, as well as the resources available to them, are often dependent on their cultural background and upbringing.

Most advancements in mental health research and treatments have stemmed from western culture and societal norms. With such a diverse population in America, not all individuals fully understand nor adopt the American perspective as their way of life. As a result, many immigrants and first-generation citizens are less informed and do not receive the adequate level of mental health services needed.

Often times, language barriers and a lack of understanding hinder individuals from seeking help. Even if someone is able to receive the necessary professional help they need, additional obstacles may arise during the treatment process.

The early development and foundation of many therapeutic approaches of mental health programs did not have minority groups involved—a topic that is currently heavily discussed and acknowledged within the mental health profession. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of these treatments on minority individuals and honor their unique traditions.

The field of psychology continues to progress forward and make necessary adjustments to diagnosis criteria and remedies to be more inclusive of other cultural beliefs. It is important to recognize that beliefs about mental health symptoms, treatment approaches, and potential challenges will vary depending on one's religious and/or cultural background. This is especially true if they belong to a minority racial group.

Mental health resources should be accessible to anyone. If you or a loved one needs mental health support, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers resources, programs, and support. Visit [nami.org](https://www.nami.org) or call the NAMI Helpline at (800) 950-6264.

# The Importance of Efficient Timesheet Approval

By Shannin Prather

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) care recipient (consumer) is the primary employer of their Independent Care Provider (IP). This role has many important responsibilities. Being a successful employer begins with creating an environment of effective communication and mutual respect.

One of the many pieces to building this kind of environment is approving care provider's timesheets quickly so they can receive timely pay. If you know the approval may be delayed, let your care providers know why you must delay and when you will be able to approve their timesheet.

As an employer, it is the consumer's responsibility to approve the timesheet in a respectfully quick timeframe after it has been submitted by the provider. When a consumer delays signing a timesheet, the paycheck for the provider will also be delayed. This causes stress for an IP and can cause feelings of frustration. Delays in approving timesheets can also negatively affect the benefits that the IP receives.

As a consumer, keep in mind that your IP—just like all of us—has bills to pay, and possibly a family to support. A delay in approving timesheets may have a negative ripple effect, resulting in late payments for rent, utilities, and other bills. Late payments can cause stress and anxiety, not to mention late fees, which may create hard feelings between the employer and the employee.

To ease the process of reviewing and approving IP timesheets, consider keeping a log to track the time your provider begins and ends work each day, totaling the number of hours worked after the IP has finished for the day. This will allow you to quickly verify the timesheets submitted by your provider(s).

[If a consumer is unexpectedly not able to approve a timesheet due to death or change in medical condition, the provider can submit the timesheet as usual and request IHSS payroll staff review it and submit it to a payroll supervisor by calling IHSS at \(408\) 792-1600.](#)

## New Provider Training Class Registration

By Shannin Prather

In-Home Supportive Services care providers who wish to register for Public Authority Services' free training classes will be able to do so online beginning in Fall 2021.

Online registration will allow providers to register for their desired classes, join a waitlist if a class is full, view their training class history and current schedule, and much more. Prior to the 2021 Fall semester, all registrations had to be done via telephone. This option will continue to be available for care providers who are not able to use the online registration system.

Care providers will receive a schedule of available classes in the mail in early August 2021. When the class registration period begins, care providers will choose whether to register via telephone or online. Instructions on how to register online will be available in the printed schedule and on the Public Authority Services website: [pascc.org](http://pascc.org).



# 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

Lori Andersen  
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Mathew Lubinsky  
Terri Possley  
(Ex-Officio Member)

Dennis Schneider  
Janie Whiteford  
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