



# The Consumer Connection

Spring - Summer 2026

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Spotting IHSS Fraud: What to Know and What to Do

By IHSS Program Integrity Unit

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program assists older adults and individuals with disabilities to live safely and independently in their own homes. As the program has grown, so have instances of rule violations and suspected fraud. Even minor violations can take essential resources away from the people who genuinely rely on IHSS. By understanding what constitutes IHSS fraud and knowing how to report concerns, we can help protect the program for the elderly and disabled residents of Santa Clara County who depend on it every day.



Fraud can happen in many ways, so it is important for both providers and recipients to recognize behaviors that may be fraudulent. Catching issues early helps protect the integrity of the IHSS program and ensures services that help remain available for those who truly need them.

Fraud happens when someone intentionally deceives or attempts to obtain something in an unlawful or unfair manner. This can include inaccurate reporting, misuse of services, or knowingly providing false information. The following sections outline the most common types of IHSS fraud:

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## Timesheet Fraud

- Providers are required to report only the hours that were genuinely worked. Claiming more hours than were provided is a crime under Penal Code §72 and §487(a).
- Timesheets can only be approved by the recipient or an authorized signer, and only after all claimed hours have been completed
- Providers are not authorized to approve their own timesheets.
- If a recipient passes away, the provider must contact IHSS and speak with an account clerk to find out how many hours may still be claimed. Hours are prorated based on the date of death, and no hours can be claimed for work performed after that date.
- Electronic Timesheets (ETS) and Telephonic Timesheets (TTS) passwords must always be kept confidential and never shared.

## Recipient Out of the Home

IHSS services are intended to support recipients in their own homes. A provider cannot be paid for services when the recipient is:

- Hospitalized
- In a skilled nursing facility
- Incarcerated
- Living or traveling outside the county or country

When the recipient is out of the home, providers may not claim hours worked for tasks such as translation, housekeeping, preparing, and delivering food. Lost hours cannot be “made up” later by increasing time on a future timesheet.

## Check Splitting

“Check splitting” occurs when a provider submits timesheets for hours not actually worked and then shares the payment with the recipient or another individual. This practice is considered theft and is a criminal offense under Penal Code § 487(a) or Penal Code § 72. Both the provider and the recipient may face prosecution.

## Take Action: Reporting Suspected IHSS Fraud in Santa Clara County

If you suspect IHSS fraud, reporting it helps protect the program and the individuals who depend on it. You do not need to be certain that fraud has occurred. Reporting concerns will allow the appropriate authorities to review the situation. You can report suspected fraud through the following methods:

- Email suspected fraud and include all available details to:
  - [IHSS-QAPI@ssa.sccgov.org](mailto:IHSS-QAPI@ssa.sccgov.org)
- Call the Santa Clara County IHSS Suspected fraud line: (408) 792-1782
- Call the IHSS main line with any questions or clarify program rules: (408) 792-1600

# Learn About High Blood Pressure

By Vi Lam

Hypertension, or high blood pressure (BP), causes a heavy force of blood to constantly push against artery walls. Left untreated, there is an increased risk of heart disease or stroke. Over time, high BP can cause damage to a person's heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes. In the United States, it is estimated that nearly half of adults are living with high blood pressure, and they are unaware of it.

High BP is sometimes referred to as a "silent killer" due to having few visible obvious symptoms. Age, family history, and certain health conditions may increase the risk of developing high BP. However, there are preventative steps that you can take to manage high BP before there are any long-term complications.

Have your doctor check your BP. If high BP is diagnosed, it is highly recommended that you get a blood pressure monitor and self-monitor at home regularly. Ask your doctor to explain how to understand the BP readings. You can also learn more about BP reading at <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure>.

Lifestyle changes have also been shown to help people manage the effects of high blood pressure. These changes include increasing physical activity, avoiding smoking, sticking to a healthy diet, limiting sodium and alcohol intake, maintaining a healthy weight, and reducing stress. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/high-blood-pressure/data-research/facts-stats/index.html> for more information on high BP and steps to help prevent or manage it.

For more information and shareable content about blood pressure, visit the [American Medical Association](#).

# Community Resource Highlight: NAMI Santa Clara County

By Ryan Gallagher

May is Mental Health Month, which is the perfect time to highlight an important nonprofit organization: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Santa Clara County. NAMI was founded in 1975 with the mission to help people with a lived experience of mental illness and their families by providing support, education, and advocacy. NAMI's goals include promoting research, reducing stigma and discrimination in the community, and improving services by working with mental health professionals and families.

NAMI Santa Clara County supports the nationwide mental health movement working to achieve equitable services and treatment for the more than 15 million Americans living with a mental diagnosis. Volunteers donate their time to provide educational classes with helpful resources, including topics on advocating for necessary health coverage, housing, rehabilitation, and employment.

It is important to end the stigma associated with mental health disorders and encourage not only consumers, but their family and friends to reach out to affiliates like NAMI to find critical support and guidance about mental health. NAMI understands mental health affects both men and women of all ages, races, and social classes. NAMI does not discriminate; it offers help to all individuals and their families, including support and services in other languages.

NAMI Santa Clara County offers free education programs, support groups, and resources to family, friends, and consumers. Make sure to take advantage of this valuable community resource and reach out for services in your area by calling (408) 453-0400 or visiting [namisantaclara.org](http://namisantaclara.org).

# The Importance of Oral Hygiene

By Vi Lam

Proper oral hygiene can be a major contributor to your overall health and well-being. As the entry point to both our digestive and respiratory systems, our mouths are important to keep healthy; the importance of keeping them healthy goes beyond avoiding cavities and bad breath.

Oral health is made up of caring for teeth, gums, and the entire mouth system as it relates to smiling, speaking, chewing, and more. Common diseases that may impact oral health include cavities (tooth decay) and gum disease.

If you do not take care of your teeth and gums, it can lead to health problems. Poor oral health can cause heart problems, pregnancy and birth complications, worse diabetes, and a higher risk of pneumonia. Some illnesses, like immune system problems or Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, can also make it harder to keep your mouth healthy.

There are multiple ways to help maintain good oral health. Visit the dentist yearly and talk to your doctor about any medications that may cause dry mouth or sudden changes in taste or smell. If you have diabetes, prioritize keeping it under control. Limit alcoholic drinks and avoid smoking to reduce the risk of oral cancer.

Your oral health can also be protected with daily home practices; such as brushing your teeth thoroughly twice a day for at least two minutes and flossing



daily. Change your toothbrush every couple of months and choose one that suits your gum sensitivity. If you have sensitive gums, soft bristles may work best. Aim your toothbrush towards where your gums meet your teeth and make circular motions at a 45-degree angle.

If you wear dentures, watch out for dental plaque that can cause bad breath and increase the risk of gum disease. Brush dentures and clean them with denture cleaning solution or mild soap. Use a clean towel to remove excess water.

Maintaining oral health may be challenging for those who are economically disadvantaged or lack dental insurance, as well as for those who are disabled, homebound, or living in a care facility.

Visit <https://publichealth.santaclaracounty.gov/health-information/oral-health> for information on finding dental health coverage, oral hygiene events, and other resources in Santa Clara County.

## Important News: Consumer Connection Newsletter Changes

Moving forward, the Consumer Connection Newsletter will no longer be automatically mailed to IHSS consumer mailing addresses. Instead, consumers will receive the newsletter via email.

If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail, please visit <https://bit.ly/46Yydll> or scan the QR code.

Change your preferences at any time by visiting the link above. If you need assistance, you can call us at (408) 350-3220.



# Are You Prepared for the Hot Weather?

By Vi Lam

Summer officially starts in June, bringing warmer temperatures that can rise and reach extreme levels. Whether you're spending time outdoors or staying indoors to avoid the heat, heat-related illness can develop quickly and may become serious or even deadly.

Examples of heat-related illness include:

- Heat cramps: muscular pains and spasms caused by the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating.
- Heat exhaustion: occurs when excessive body fluids are lost through heavy sweating.
- Heat stroke: occurs when heat exhaustion is left unattended. It is a life-threatening condition, where the body temperature rises so high that it causes brain damage or, in extreme cases, can even result in death.

During periods of hot weather, if you are experiencing any of these signs, get help right away:

- Body temperature over 105°F
- Rapid pulse
- Shallow breathing
- Hot, red, and dry skin
- Confusion
- Throbbing headache
- Nausea
- Failure to sweat
- Unconsciousness
- Seizures

Older adults with jobs that require physical exertion, infants or young children, animals and pets, and anyone with a chronic medical condition are at a higher risk of suffering from extreme heat.



What can you do to treat heat-related illnesses? For heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, start by slowly cooling the individual, providing fluids, and loosening their clothing. For an immediate medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

If you are unable to keep cool at home, cooling centers are open during extreme heat. Visit <https://oem.santaclaracounty.gov/disaster-preparedness/hot-weather-safety> to locate a cooling center near you in Santa Clara County, and to find out more about what you can do during the warmer months.

Consider these tips for hot weather safety:

- Drink lots of water
- Wear cool clothing and do not dress in layers
- If you're out in the sun, cover your head and wear sunglasses and sunscreen
- Do not leave people or pets in a closed parked car, even if it is under a shaded area
- When possible, stay in an air-conditioned area or rest under shady areas

Be prepared this summer by reviewing other tips you can do in your home to keep cool at <https://www.pge.com/en/outages-and-safety/safety/severe-weather-safety.html>. Share what you learn with friends and family to help them prepare for the summer heat.



# Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise

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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**

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