

# Consumer~Caregiver Connections



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Summer 2003

Sonoma County In-Home Supportive Services  
**Public Authority**

## Public Authority Makes Its Mark

The Sonoma County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority was created by the Board of Supervisors in June 2001 in compliance with State legislation. The Public Authority began formal operations in February 2002. Several significant improvements have occurred in the first year.

Wages for IHSS caregivers increased from minimum wage to \$9.50 per hour and health (medical/vision) and dental insurance is currently provided to 575 eligible caregivers. These changes have certainly made it much easier for IHSS consumers to find and retain qualified caregivers.

The IHSS Public Authority took over operations of the caregiver Registry that had been previously run by the IHSS program. Several enhancements were made to the Registry, including conducting criminal background checks on all applicants and obtaining a computerized program that helps match caregivers with consumer requests. Registry Coordinators work closely with the IHSS Social Workers and are co-located in the same office complex. About 350 caregivers were added to the Registry in the first year, and Registry staff filled nearly 700 consumer requests for caregivers.

Another new and valuable addition is the monthly caregiver

training classes. A few training topics in the first year included: *Preventing the Spread of Germs, Safety for You and Your Consumer, Nutrition, Diabetes, Dementia, End of Life Care Issues, Spinal Cord Injury, and Stroke Management*. An average of 25 caregivers have attended each class. The training classes are generally held on the last Friday of each month.

A new program, referred to as the Urgent Substitute Provider Program (USPP), was established. For information about the program, please read "*Unexpected Caregiver Absences and Emergencies*" on page 4. The USPP was implemented in September 2002, and has filled 67 requests totaling 266 hours of service through April 2003.

The Public Authority is co-located in the same office complex as the County's Adult and Aging Services, which includes IHSS. This helps foster a collaborative effort to ensure that services are provided in a coordinated and efficient manner.

As you can tell, the Public Authority has certainly made a significant difference in the lives of many IHSS consumers and caregivers. The staff will continue to be challenged to work towards further improvements in the next year. You are encouraged to call upon us when needed.

Sincerely,  
M H

Manager IHSS Public Authority



Michael Humphrey with his assistance dog, Warren.

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## The IHSS Advisory Committee

While legislative action resulted in the Public Authority and the Sonoma County IHSS Advisory Committee, it was left to both bodies to develop programs and activities within guidelines established by that legislation. The IHSS Program, IHSS Public Authority and IHSS Advisory Committee seem to be like the song lyrics “*Love and Marriage, goes together like a horse and carriage...*” Actually the real partners are the consumers and the caregivers. It is for this reason that the Advisory Committee needs to hear from these partners. What works? What does not work? What can we do to improve the quality of life for those who depend on IHSS to remain independent in their own homes?

The IHSS Advisory Committee meets the fourth Monday of each month. Time is set aside for **Public Comment** at the beginning of each meeting. At least once a year we also hold a Public Hearing, a time for you to speak up and lend us your ideas. We meet at **2160 Northpoint Parkway** and look forward to meeting you there.

Very truly yours,

*Marie White*

Chair, IHSS Advisory Committee

### Advisory Committee

**Stacy Daniels**

**Mike Durrant**

**Paulene Goddard**

**Diane Kaljian**

*Ex-officio Member*

**Joann Keyston**

**Maureen Latimer**

*Secretary*

**Mary Raymond**

**M. Julia Regan**

**Marie White**

*Chair*

**Herb Willsmore**

*Vice-Chair*

## The IHSS Registry

by John Chan, Registry Supervisor

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all IHSS consumers to use our Registry caregiver referral service. Our Registry staff is composed of four skilled Coordinators, who work to find you appropriate caregivers to fit your service needs.

The Registry pre-screens all the caregivers listed with the Registry, including criminal background checks and reference checks. Caregivers are also oriented to the IHSS program, and receive a personal interview.

Once an IHSS consumer makes a service request, the Registry Coordinator searches for a match between the consumer’s service needs and the interests and skills of the Registry caregivers. When suitable caregivers are found, the Registry

Coordinator will make a referral to the consumer who can then set up interviews. Once a consumer has selected the caregiver to hire, Registry Coordinators can continue to assist in developing a good working relationship with the chosen caregiver.

The Registry has been successful in referring many caregivers to IHSS consumers. These services are provided at no cost.

Call the IHSS Registry directly (565-5700) for a referral of a caregiver or contact your IHSS Social Worker (565-5900), who can make a request for a caregiver for you. Spanish-speaking consumers call Olivia at 565-5707. The Registry staff looks forward to hearing from you.

## Quick Stress Relief

from the Red Cross

Got a minute? Give yourself a massage. The following moves will help you relieve tension about your head, neck, and shoulders.

1. The Scalp Soother. Place thumbs behind your ears and spread fingers on top of your head. Move your scalp back and forth slightly by making circles with your fingertips for about 15-20 seconds.
2. The Eye Easer. Close your eyes and place your ring fingers directly under your eyebrows, near the bridge of your nose. Slowly increase pressure for five seconds, then gently release. Repeat 2 to 3 times.
3. The Shoulder Saver. Place your left hand on the right side of your neck by your shoulder. Press fingers firmly into the muscle while tucking your chin in toward your chest. Exhale and hold for 10 seconds, release, repeat on the left side.

**Let us hear from you.** You are important to us. Please give us a call at 565-571 or write the IHSS **Public Authority**  
P. O. Box 1949,  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402



## Resources on the Web

### CAREGIVER WEB SITES

Caregiving.com  
<http://www.caregiving.com/index.html>

National Alliance for Caregiving  
<http://www.caregiving.org>

### CONSUMERS WEB SITES

Safety for Elders  
<http://www.eldersafety.org/>

Disability Related Products/Services  
<http://www.makoa.org/cmpyinfo.htm>

Disability Resources on the Internet  
<http://www.disabilityresources.org/>

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities  
<http://www.jik.com/disaster.html>

## Consumer/Caregiver Wisdom.....

It is very important to take care of yourself in order to be able to take care of others. Eating well is one way to do this.

Eating properly means:

1. Drink plenty of water
2. Eat several servings of fruits, vegetables and beans every day
3. Choose whole grains
4. Go easy on salt
5. Limit sugary processed foods
6. Take your vitamins
7. Pay attention to your food serving portion size
8. Get calcium from dark leafy greens, fish (sardines and salmon) or soy products

## Consumer Tips:

### How to Hire a Caregiver - Interviewing

By Angelina Byrne

#### The Telephone Interview

We suggest you pre-screen applicants over the telephone to determine whether it appears to be worthwhile to schedule a longer, in-person interview. Here are some tips on phone interviewing:

1. Give applicants a brief description of the chores and the days and hours your job will involve.
2. Describe your health and/or physical problems.
3. Ask whether they've had experience with the duties you have described.
4. Let them know if you smoke or have pets.
5. Notice whether they can give a specific, thorough description of previous experiences, rather than vague or general statements.
6. Ask specifically what kind of schedule they are looking for.
7. Let them know if you want them to use their car to help you. You must pay for gas/mileage.
8. Listen for a pleasant tone of voice and attitude on the phone

If an applicant does not impress you on the telephone, do not give out your address. Instead, state that you have several interviews to complete. Insure that you have their phone number where you can get back to them, and thank them for their time.

If you feel an applicant is suitable, you can schedule an interview at your home or at an alternative place. Give the applicant the address and schedule a day and time for the in-person interview. Schedule personal interviews only with the people you feel good about and would really like to meet. Tell the applicant to bring a valid photo ID with them to the interview.

#### The Personal Interview

Plan on having someone you trust with you for the personal interview - a neighbor, friend, or relative.

Ask the applicant for their photo ID. Request that he/she include a list of references including names and phone numbers. Even if the applicant has letters of recommendation, ask him/her for references whom you can speak to personally.

Start the interview with a full discussion of your needs, lifestyle, schedule, and authorized hours. It is helpful to the prospective worker to understand exactly what you are looking for and their anticipated work schedule. Be honest. Do not just say what you think the applicant wants to hear. If your needs are not clear up front, and you hire someone that doesn't fully understand your needs, you may both end up being miserable.

Try to ask open-ended questions which require more than a "yes" or "no" answer and which gives you a feeling for the personality and experience of the applicant. Examples of open-ended interview questions are:

- ◆ Please tell me about your current and past home care experience.
- ◆ Why are you interested in this particular job?
- ◆ What do you like best about home care?
- ◆ What do you find to be the most difficult part of working in home care?
- ◆ Is there anything about the job description that you are uncomfortable with?
- ◆ What would you do in case of an emergency? Give a realistic example.
- ◆ What kind of commitment are you willing to make to this job?
- ◆ Tell me about a time when you had to calm an upset client. How did you handle the situation?
- ◆ Tell me about a time a client insulted you. How did you handle it?



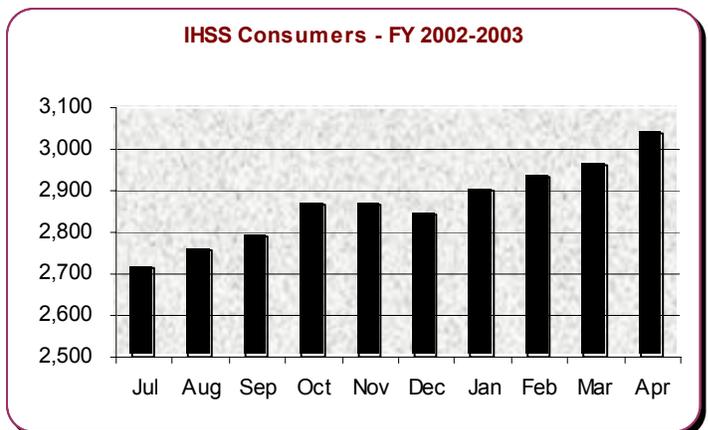
## IHSS Program Information

by Diane Kaljian, Section Manager

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) in Sonoma County is growing. As of May, there are close to 3,100 IHSS consumers. Every month about 125 new consumers apply for IHSS. We are pleased that the Public Authority is here to help find caregivers for both new consumers and those consumers who have been on the program.

Social Workers and Eligibility Workers diligently enroll new IHSS consumers through home visits and telephone interviews. This usually takes about six weeks from the time a new consumer or their representative calls to apply for IHSS to the time that all the required paperwork is completed. However, the date that the telephone call to apply for IHSS was received is the date that a provider can begin to be paid.

The Social Workers' and Eligibility Workers' caseloads have increased and they may not be as available as they have been in the past. Please remember to call your Social Worker if you have changes in your living situation, your ability to do your chores or personal care, or changes in your income or assets.



## Dealing with the Unexpected Caregiver Absences and Emergencies

by John Chan, Registry Supervisor

Occasionally, caregivers may not be able to care for their IHSS consumers due to an unexpected illness, a family emergency, or other unforeseeable circumstances. These are unplanned absences, unlike planned vacations and holidays. The IHSS consumer may have urgent service needs that cannot be put off until the caregiver returns, such as personal care, feeding and meal preparation, and critical medical appointments. In such circumstances, the **Urgent**

**Substitute Provider Program (USPP)** is available to provide necessary temporary coverage.

If you are an IHSS consumer and experiencing a temporary unexpected absence of your regular caregiver, and need urgent care service, please call 707-565-5719 or 800-601-4222 for an assessment for USPP coverage. Please remember that if you face a medical emergency, you should call **911**.

**“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”**

Theodore Roosevelt

## The Caregiver's Voice - Tips for Caregivers By Nancy Manning

- Take good care of your health - eat well, get sleep and use good body mechanics while doing any kind of work.
- Avoid burdening IHSS consumers with your own personal stories or worries. IHSS consumers may not have the energy to listen or advise others.
- Try not to fix or change an IHSS consumer's behavior. You have a Social Worker and an IHSS Public Authority Registry Coordinator to support you and your IHSS consumer. Use us.
- You are making the difference which lets our IHSS consumers stay in their homes. Maintaining a secure and happy relationship will be good for you and them.
- Seriously listen to what the IHSS consumers tell you. If instructions are unclear, ask again or repeat instructions back to them. Trust is vital in these relationships. It is your job to be sure you understand how the task is to be done. Trust can be broken easily if the IHSS consumer feels he/she is not heard.

**Suggestions for this column are welcome.** This newsletter can be your voice. Please contact a Registry Coordinator with your suggestions and comments (707) 565-5700.

## Know Your Medical and Dental Benefits The Benefits Department

IHSS workers of Sonoma County who work 65 or more hours for two consecutive months are eligible to apply for medical and dental benefits. The plan is currently offered to the first 575 eligible caregivers that meet the minimum work requirement and apply for benefits. **Enrollment is not automatic.** Any caregiver who feels they qualify for the benefits and hasn't received the enrollment packet should call the Public Authority benefits department at 707-565-5703.

The Kaiser medical/vision plan offers most non-emergency visits and prescriptions for a \$10 co-pay. The Delta Dental plan offers 100% diagnostic and preventative care through a defined dental provider organization (DPO). The caregivers' share of the health insurance premium cost is only \$12 per month and dental is \$5 per month. The caregiver must pay union dues and their insurance co-share premium(s).

Caregivers are required to comply with rules of eligibility, meet timesheet deadlines (15th of each month), pay co-share premium, and read important information mailed from this department. 575 caregivers can be enrolled in the benefits program each month. When the program is full, waitlist numbers are assigned based on the order in which the application was received. To remain on the waitlist, eligibility must

be maintained each month. Should you lose benefit coverage, there is a disqualifying period that must be met before eligibility can be re-established.

For claims and specific benefits questions, call Employees' Dental and Medical Trust; for dues and health deduction issues, call SEIU, Local 250; timesheet and payroll questions, call IHSS Payroll; and for benefit eligibility or to request an enrollment packet, call Sonoma County IHSS Public Authority Benefits office.

### KEEP ELIGIBLE.

**MEET MINIMUM WORK REQUIREMENT**  
65 hours per month for two consecutive months

**SUBMIT TIMESHEETS BY DEADLINE**  
15th of each month

### Important Numbers

<b>(707) 565-5703</b>	IHSS Public Authority Benefits & Enrollment & Eligibility
<b>(888) 838-5370</b>	Employees'/Employers' Dental & Medical Trust
<b>(800) 585-4250</b>	SEIU, Local 250, Oakland
<b>(707) 526-4825</b>	SEIU, Local 250, Santa Rosa
<b>(707) 565-5900</b>	IHSS Payroll

## Caregiver Training Classes (IHSS Consumers are welcome too!)

The IHSS Public Authority provides training opportunities to IHSS caregivers and consumers. Monthly classes are held at the Adult and Aging Services Conference Center (2160 Northpoint Parkway). There is generally a \$10 incentive for IHSS caregivers who complete each class. Classes for the next three months are listed below.

July 25	1:00—4:00 p.m.	Healthy Aging & Problems of Aging
August 29	1:00—4:00 p.m.	Nutrition: Preventing & Managing Health Problems with Diet
September 26	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Diabetes and Cardiac Disease



## Caregiver Training Videos and Discussions

Registry staff facilitate a discussion for caregivers after the video which is shown in our office.



July 31	1:30—2:30	<i>“Dealing with Alzheimer’s Disease” &amp; Communicating with Someone Who has Alzheimer’s Disease</i>
August 28	1:30—2:30	<i>“My Body is Not Who I Am”</i> with a special guest during discussion.
September 25	1:30—2:30	<i>“Depression and the Elderly” &amp; “Guilt, Loss and Older Adults”</i>

## IHSS Payroll Information

by Diane Kaljian, Section Manager

IHSS payroll has set a new timesheet processing record every month this year. In May over 7,000 timesheets were processed either the day they were received or the next working day.

You can help make sure your timesheet is processed quickly by checking for errors before you turn it in. **Please make sure both you and the consumer you work for sign and date the timesheet.** If you drop off your timesheet at the Paulin building, it is picked up once a day at the drop box or twice a day from the lobby. Dropping off your timesheet at the Northpoint drop box will delay the day it gets to payroll. You can always mail your timesheet to Payroll.

### Payroll Phone Numbers

- (707) 565-5900** Ask for payroll
- (707) 545-3172** Español
- (707) 565-3154** Report work injury
- (707) 565-2896** Employment verification

### Timesheet Check List

- ◆ Check for errors
- ◆ Have Consumer sign & date timesheet
- ◆ Be sure you sign it
- ◆ Turn it in on time

### Where to Turn in Timesheet

- ◆ Paulin Building at lobby or drop box
- ◆ Northpoint at drop box
- ◆ U.S. Mail

Sonoma County  
In-Home Supportive Services  
**Public Authority**

2280 Northpoint Parkway  
P. O. Box 1949  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-1949

Phone: 707-565-5700  
Fax: 707-565-5720



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Visit our Web Site:

[www.sonomacounty-ihsspa.org](http://www.sonomacounty-ihsspa.org)

## Mark your 2003 calendar

### July

- 04 Independence Day,  
Office closed
- 14 IHSS Executive  
Committee Meeting
- 24 Class: *Healthy Aging &  
Problems with Aging*
- 28 Advisory Committee  
Meeting
- 31 Video & Discussion  
Double Feature:  
"Dealing with  
Alzheimer's Disease"  
& "Communicating  
with Someone Who  
Has Alzheimer's  
Disease"

### August

- 11 IHSS Executive  
Committee Meeting
- 25 Advisory Committee  
Meeting
- 28 Video & Discussion  
Featuring a Special  
Guest: "My Body is  
Not Who I Am"
- 29 Class: *Nutrition -  
Preventing and  
Managing Health  
Problems with Diet*

### September

- 08 IHSS Executive  
Committee Meeting
- 22 Advisory Committee  
Meeting
- 25 Video & Discussion  
DoubleFeature:  
"Depression and the  
Elderly" and "Guilt,  
Loss and Older Adults"
- 26 Class: *Diabetes and  
Cardiac Disease*

## Resources

### IHSS Public Authority & Registry

(707) 565-5700  
(707) 565-5720 (fax)

### IHSS Program, Social Workers & Payroll

(707) 565-5900

### IHSS Advisory Committee

(707) 565-5700

### Benefits Enrollment & Eligibility

(707) 565-5703

### Español

(707) 565-5707

### Urgent Substitute Provider Program (USPP)

(707) 565-5719  
(800) 601-4222