



# The Consumer Connection

Summer 2020

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Prepare for Emergencies with ReadySCC and AlertSCC

By Sergio Serna

ReadySCC and AlertSCC are free tools for Santa Clara County residents that can assist in preparing for and being informed of emergencies that may occur in our community.

Get prepared for natural disasters with ReadySCC, a mobile phone app that guides users in creating an emergency supply kit—food, water, first aid supplies, flashlight, etc.—as well as storing critical information such as out-of-town contacts and meet-up locations for family members.

ReadySCC also includes information about common disasters in our area, as well as local services, resources, and tools that you may need during a disaster. ReadySCC is paid for by the County of Santa Clara with grant funds provided by the Department of Homeland Security and is free to users.

Stay informed with AlertSCC, a free, easy, and confidential way for anyone who lives or works in Santa Clara County to get emergency alerts sent directly to their mobile phone, email, landline phone, or TTY/TDD device. AlertSCC provides information and instructions in a variety of emergency situations, such as flooding, wildfires, air quality issues, public safety incidents, and more.



Shannin Prather, Public Authority Services by Sourcewise Training Manager and also a user of the AlertSCC app, loves how non-invasive the free app is and states, “AlertSCC only sends messages when it needs to warn me of something in my area, such as when the smoke from recent fires in Northern California was affecting the air quality here in San Jose. I got an alert right on my cell phone warning me to be careful if I left the house.”

Download the ReadySCC Disaster Preparation app from your phone’s app store and sign up for AlertSCC at [www.AlertSCC.com](http://www.AlertSCC.com).

# Remembering Cheryl Hewitt, Disability Rights Advocate

By Beverly Lozoff, IHSS Advisory Board Chair



Cheryl Hewitt, a member of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Board for the past few years and the 2018-2019 IHSS Advisory Board Chair passed on May 21, 2020. Cheryl was passionate about the populations that rely on IHSS and the role of the consumer

advocate. She was a valuable addition to the Advisory Board and represented persons with developmental disabilities very well.

In a statement published on May 22, 2020, Santa Clara County District 3 Supervisor Dave Cortese wrote, “It is with great sadness that I tell you that Cheryl Hewitt, a strong and passionate advocate for people with disabilities, passed away late yesterday night. Cheryl worked for my office, part-time, as an advisor for me and the staff on how to inform and better serve the disabled community.”

Cortese’s statement continued by explaining, “In the face of COVID-19, Cheryl was especially adamant that in-home caregivers be given recognition along with first-responders because of the tireless devotion

they showed in caring for her and hundreds of other clients. She believed that those employed by In-Home Supportive Services should have personal protection equipment because they worked directly with clients who are at a higher risk of infection. She was among representatives of the disabled community who sent their concerns to Governor Gavin Newsom and other state public health officials in a letter [in April 2020].”

The statement by Cortese concludes with “Cheryl served on the State Council on Developmental Disabilities Regional Advisory Committee and the Disability Rights California OCRA Committee. She will be greatly missed, but also long remembered for improving the quality of life for people with disabilities and fostering community awareness to their needs.”

Mary Tinker, Chief Operations Officer of Sourcewise adds, “Cheryl was a strong leader with insights that most do not possess for looking deeper into difficult situations. She had a kind heart and wanted the best life for everyone, including people with developmental disabilities. She sought to teach us all how to see the individual and not the disability.”

Cheryl contributed in many ways to our community and the world of disability rights. Her strength and passion will be missed.

## Staying Safe in the Sun

By Shannin Prather

It’s natural to want to get out in the sun as the weather warms up, especially after sheltering in place for so long. It’s safe to get out in the sun, as long as you are sticking to social distancing guidelines, continue to take precautionary measures, and protect your skin.

Ultraviolet (UV) Safety Awareness Month happens every July. The month serves as a reminder of the connection between UV light and cancers of the skin, eye, lip, and to educate people about effective UV protection. UV rays from the sun and other sources like tanning beds are the number one causes of skin cancer. Too much exposure can also cause sunburn, eye damage, and wrinkles.

Reducing sun exposure is the best way to prevent skin cancer. Stay out of the sun during midday as the rays are more intense. When you’re outdoors,

shield your skin by wearing lightweight clothing, a hat with a brim, sunglasses that block UV rays, and using sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 to help lower your risk.

Apply sunscreen to exposed skin, including easily overlooked areas like the ears and back of the neck. Sunscreen with a higher SPF offers more protection. An SPF of 30 means you get the same amount of exposure in 30 minutes as you would in one minute without protection. Look for products that block both UV-A and UV-B rays. Remember that even the best sunscreen does not block ultraviolet rays completely.

Learn more about sun safety by visiting the cancer home page on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

# Take Action to Boost Your Immune System

By Shannin Prather

Hopefully, you will never have to test your immune system defense against Coronavirus (COVID-19), but it is always a good idea for everyone, especially older adults to maintain a strong immune system to fight whatever may come your way. Always remember to wash your hands for 20 seconds and practice social distancing to protect yourself from viruses.

Keep your immune system in tip-top shape:

**Eat right.** A study at Cambridge University published in October 2011 recorded that immunocompromised people improved their immune response by eating more fruit and vegetables. The Cleveland Clinic added that vitamins C, B6, and E are the most important for immune function. While you can take a supplement, the body absorbs them best when eaten in foods that are rich in the nutrients. Citrus fruits are high in vitamin C, vegetables including soybeans contain vitamin B6, and sunflower seeds and almonds deliver vitamin E.

“Eighty percent of your immune system is in the gut, so when it is healthy, we tend to be able to fight off infections faster and better,” said Yufang Lin, M.D., of the Center for Integrative Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Lin also noted that consuming “fermented foods, such as yogurt, sauerkraut, miso, and kefir are beneficial because they boost healthy bacteria in the gut.”

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**Get your sleep.** Sleep and immunity are closely tied together. Your immune system needs downtime, meaning sleep. During sleep cycles, the body produces and distributes important immune cells.

When your body is sleep-deprived, it produces stress hormones such as cortisol, which can suppress your immune system. Several studies have shown that poor sleep can result in a decrease of certain white blood cells that play a major role in fighting both cancer and viruses.

**Get active.** According to many studies, a strong immune system is highly connected with fitness. With shelter-in-place orders set up across the country, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization encourage regular exercise. The 2019 Journal of Sport and Health Science found that exercise can improve your immune response, lower illness risk, and reduce inflammation.

Try a low-impact workout at home such as leg and arm lifts, yoga, tai chi, or walking laps through your house. Getting active for even seven minutes, twice per day can have a very positive effects on the immune system and a person’s overall well-being.

A strong link is associated with a person’s immune system and mental health. Although it can be difficult to avoid stress in our lives, especially in the current global situation you can adopt strategies to help better manage your stress levels.

Though none of these suggestions can prevent COVID-19, they may increase your body’s defenses and help your immune system protect you against the virus.



# Palliative Care Focuses on People, not Medical Conditions

By Grant Smith, MD, Stanford Palliative Care, Twitter: @GSmithHPM

## It's More Than You Think

Whether it's heard from the media, friends, or even healthcare providers, there are many myths and misconceptions about palliative care. Many people confuse palliative care with hospice or think that palliative care means end-of-life care. It's important to know palliative care is a lot more than what you may think.

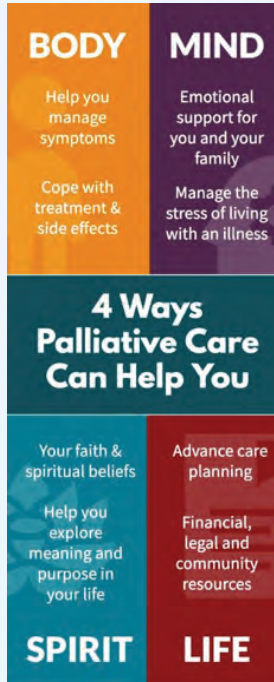
## It's About Quality of Life

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both the patient and their family. Palliative care is provided by a trained team of doctors, nurses, and specialists who work together with the patient's various doctors to provide an extra layer of support.

## It's Appropriate at Any Age, Any Stage

Palliative care is appropriate at any age and during any stage in a serious illness, and it can be provided along with curative treatment. During a typical day in my clinic, I will see patients who are either newly diagnosed, getting treatments to cure their illness, and getting treatments that may not cure them but can help them live longer with fewer symptoms. Several studies have shown that the earlier palliative care is involved, the greater the benefits.

One of our patients commented, "I wish I had reached out to palliative care sooner in my diagnosis, but at least I know they are still available for assistance after my treatment ends."



## It's More Than Hospice

Many people confuse palliative care with hospice. Hospice refers to a philosophy of care that prioritizes comfort over prolonging life or seeking a cure. Hospice is typically for people who are estimated to live for six months or less. While all hospice is palliative care, not all palliative care is hospice.

## It's About Treating the Mind, Body, and Spirit

Palliative care teams know that living with a serious illness can cause uncomfortable physical symptoms, emotional, and spiritual distress. Because of this, palliative care is provided by an interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, social workers, and chaplains to provide whole-person care.

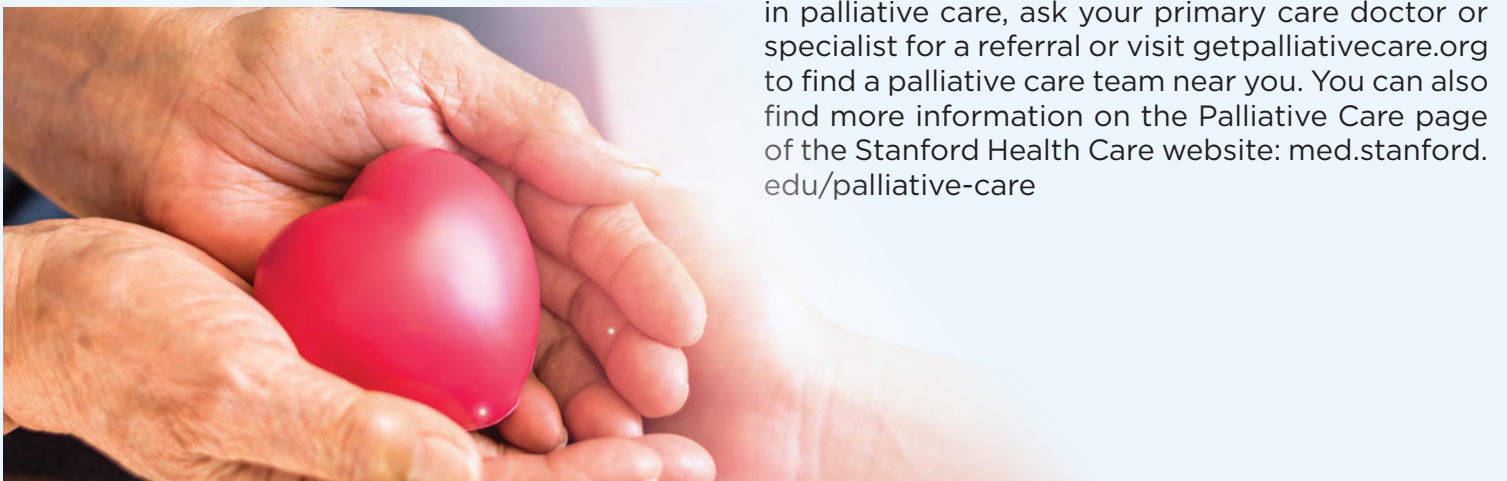
One patient described her experience working with our team and shared, "Everyone made me feel at ease and I felt supported, that my concerns were heard and addressed with a good care plan."

## It's About Loving People

"The practice of medicine is really about loving people," said Dr. Josh Biddle, Director of Outpatient Palliative Care at Marin General Hospital. While some healthcare providers might dismiss this notion as an impractical sentiment in the world of fast-paced, technology-driven, and modern medicine; many of my palliative care colleagues and I see this statement as a vision we try to embody while working with patients and their families.

## How to Get Palliative Care

If either you, a family member, or client is interested in palliative care, ask your primary care doctor or specialist for a referral or visit [getpalliativecare.org](http://getpalliativecare.org) to find a palliative care team near you. You can also find more information on the Palliative Care page of the Stanford Health Care website: [med.stanford.edu/palliative-care](http://med.stanford.edu/palliative-care)



## Community Resource

### Highlight: Friendship Line

The Friendship Line is both a crisis intervention hotline and a warmline for non-emergency emotional support calls. The Friendship Line was founded in 1973 by Dr. Patrick Arbore, Director of Institute on Aging's (IOA) Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention.

The Friendship Line provides round-the-clock crisis support services including:

- Emotional support
- Elder abuse reporting
- Well-being checks
- Grief support through assistance and reassurance
- Active suicide intervention
- Information and referrals for isolated older adults and adults living with disabilities

IOA's 24-hour toll free Friendship Line is the only accredited crisis line in the country for adults 60 years and older and adults living with disabilities.

The Friendship Line also makes ongoing outreach calls to isolated older adults. The call-out service strives to improve the quality of life and connection of isolated older adults.

Any aging adult or person who is living with a disability, suffers from depression, loneliness, isolation, anxiousness, or maybe thinking about death or suicide can benefit from a completely confidential phone call with a Friendship Line volunteer.

Connect with a Friendship Line volunteer by calling (800) 971-0016.

## Understanding a Share of Cost on Your Case

By IHSS Staff

Some consumers of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) have a Share of Cost (SOC) for their services. Those with an SOC have a higher income than most individuals receiving SSI/Medi-Cal and, as a result, need to spend some of their monthly income for medical services before SSI/Medi-Cal benefits will pay.

Depending on the amount of income being received, you may be required to pay a certain amount each month before Medi-Cal will pay for services like IHSS. The SOC allows people with higher monthly incomes to receive IHSS if a part of the cost is paid by them directly. An SOC is similar to a private health plan's monthly deductible; the SOC is Medi-Cal's out of pocket deductible.

The SOC is usually paid to whichever Medi-Cal approved services are used first during the month. For example, if you have an SOC, you may need to pay out of pocket for your first medical appointment or the pharmacy before Medi-Cal begins to pay for the rest. Once your IHSS provider has submitted their timesheet, the IHSS program will send a notice letting you know how much of your SOC has been met for the month and how much you will need to pay your IHSS provider as part of your SOC. Once Medi-Cal has determined that the SOC has been met for the month, the IHSS program (at the State level) will issue your IHSS provider a paycheck for the remaining amount owed.

If you have an SOC and believe it is too high, there are several Medi-Cal programs that can assist you in lowering or removing your SOC, such as:

- 250% Working Disabled Program
- Aged and Disabled Federal Poverty Level Program
- the Medi-Cal 1619b waiver
- the Medi-Cal Pickle Program

To find out if you qualify for any of these programs, contact your Medi-Cal Eligibility Worker at 1-877-962-3633 or email [BACclericalPhoneSupport@ssa.sccgov.org](mailto:BACclericalPhoneSupport@ssa.sccgov.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

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(Ex-Officio Member)

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