



# The Consumer Connection

Spring 2015

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Providing a Safe and Healthy Work Environment: Tips for IHSS Consumers

By Araceli Gaona and Fran Kiernan

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumer is the employer of the Independent Provider (IP) for the purpose of hiring, firing, and supervising the work. With IHSS, the consumer's home is the work place. Providing a safe and healthy work place is key to a successful and happy work relationship. The following are tips and friendly reminders to help with this:

1. Providing a safe and healthy work place starts with the right tools. IHSS consumers are responsible to provide the cleaning supplies to the IP for domestic services, such as a broom, mop, and cleaning agents. Consumers should also provide gloves to the IP for personal care services.
  2. Consumers should ask IPs to do only the authorized IHSS services. If you are not sure what services you are authorized for, please review your Notice of Action (NOA) provided to you by IHSS. If the IP is injured while doing an unauthorized service, the IP may not be eligible for Worker's Compensation and the consumer may be held liable.
  3. IHSS tasks need to stay within the scope of services and within reason. Asking an IP to get on their hands and knees to wash the floors is not within reason and could create an uncomfortable situation for the IP. Please refer to your NOA, page 4, for a description from IHSS on each authorized service.
  4. A good employer speaks in a respectful manner with their IP on any concerns they have. If your IP is not doing the service as you would like, explain to them how you want it done. Firing an IP is not necessarily the best solution; allow time for the IP to train and learn the work that you need done.
  5. As a friendly reminder, IHSS consumers should review and sign legitimate timesheets from their IPs. Keep your own record of the hours your IP worked to avoid any discrepancies. A simple time log can help with this.
- Finally, remember that courtesy and a simple 'Thank You' goes a long way. Please watch for upcoming newsletters that will focus on each of the above topics in more depth.

# Public Authority Registry

By Araceli Gaona

The Public Authority Registry is a referral service assisting In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers. This registry provides a list of pre-screened and experienced care providers who match the needs of the consumer.

Our staff is available to assist consumers by sending a tailored list of care providers who are available to work the authorized IHSS services and hours. In addition, the registry matches requests for specific criteria such as geographic location, language, and desired hours.

The consumer interviews potential care providers from the referral list and makes the final decision on the selection of a candidate as well as supervises the work of the care provider.

The Public Authority Registry staff also assists IHSS consumers with tips and guidance to ensure



a successful and healthy working relationship with their provider.

Whether you need a new care provider or need to hire additional providers, the Registry is here to help! For more information, call (408) 350-3251 and ask to speak to a Registry Specialist.

## Helpful Phone and Interview Tips for Consumers

By Fran Kiernan and Monica M. Macer

The first step to establishing a successful consumer/caregiver relationship is knowing how to conduct an interview. Here are some helpful tips when interviewing a potential caregiver over the phone or in person.

If you leave a message for a caregiver, or call from a “blocked/restricted number,” be sure to speak your name and phone number clearly and distinctly. If they can’t understand you, they probably won’t call back.

During the phone interview, give important information about your needs: What are the services and hours authorized by IHSS? What schedule do you want the caregiver to work? What date do you want them to start?

When interviewing a potential provider, by phone or face to face, be sure to avoid asking inappropriate questions regarding their personal life, marital status, age, or religion. You are looking for information about their experience and qualifications as a caregiver.

Some appropriate questions would be: How long have you been a caregiver? What types of services have you provided to previous clients? Do you have any references? (Remember, though, that providers on the Public Authority registry have already had their references checked, so you won’t need to do this for those providers.) What do you enjoy about caregiving? Asking these types of questions will help you determine if a particular caregiver is the right one for you.

# Emergency Preparation

By Shannin Prather

Living in California, most of us have experienced an earthquake before, and realize the importance of being prepared for such an event. Creating an emergency plan is a smart strategy to help you and your loved ones stay safe during and after an emergency. The American Red Cross has many tips and checklists to help prepare for emergencies. Here are some great tips:

## Create a Support Network of 2 to 3 People

These can be family, friends, neighbors, care provider(s), or others whom you trust, who are willing and able to check on you during emergencies. These people should know your needs, and be able to provide assistance.

## Communication and Evacuation Plans

Where will you meet your loved ones if you are evacuated? Where is the nearest emergency shelter, and how will you get there? Agree on an out-of-area contact person, who will share messages among you and your support network members. Advanced planning will ensure that everyone in your support network stay connected, informed, and calm.

## Put Together a Kit of Emergency Supplies

Gather emergency supplies,

and store them in a container that is easy to access and transport. Items such as these should be included:

- A few days' worth of water and nonperishable food, a can opener
- A flashlight with extra batteries - check yearly to make sure it works
- A first aid kit, hand sanitizer and a roll of toilet paper
- A pack of matches or a lighter in a waterproof container (or zip lock bag)
- A whistle or other noise-maker to alert emergency workers to your presence
- A change of clothing, something for warmth (jacket, blanket, gloves, etc.)
- A photo copy of I.D. & other important documentation
- A back-up of essential items, such as medications, tooth brush, glasses, hearing aid batteries, denture cup, etc.
- A reminder check-list of all necessary essentials, such as: air tank, walker/cane, wheelchair, dentures, glasses, hearing aids, etc.
- A distraction: something to entertain you, such as a book or deck of playing cards

For more information about how you can be prepared for an emergency, please visit The Red Cross website at: [www.redcross.org/prepare](http://www.redcross.org/prepare) or call (877) 727-6771.

# IHSS Advisory Board

The advisory Board for IHSS is a state mandated group of volunteers appointed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to provide ongoing advice and recommendations about IHSS.

This is a great place to bring concerns about IHSS and how service is being delivered. If you, or the person providing your care, are interested in attending any of these meetings, they are held the third Tuesday of every month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and are open to the public.

If you are interested in attending any of these meetings, you can call the Public Authority to confirm the meeting location: (408) 350-3286.

## Get More Community Information

Are you interested in receiving more helpful tips, links to community resources and news on topics of interest to your community? Sign up to receive the free Sourcewise Quarterly Newsletter. If you wish to subscribe to our e-mailed or mailed newsletter, please e-mail [community@mysourcewise.com](mailto:community@mysourcewise.com) or call (408) 350-3200, option 1.



SOURCEWISE  
COMMUNITY RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

**Building Blocks**  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

# Staying Healthy With: A Little Daily Exercise

By Shannin Prather

Regular exercise and physical activity are important to the physical and mental health of everyone, including older adults and persons with disabilities. Being physically active can help you continue to do the things you enjoy and stay independent as you age. It can help lubricate joints for improved ease of movement, increase circulation, improve posture and balance, and improve flexibility.

In some cases, exercise can even be an effective treatment for many chronic conditions. For example, studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease, or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems, or difficulty walking.

Not only will you strengthen your muscles, there are many mental health benefits as well, such as stress reduction, relieving feelings of depression and

anxiety, improving self-confidence, boosting memory, enhancing moods and much more.

This doesn't need to be an intense workout routine. It can be as simple as going for a walk for a half hour, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, lifting 2 pound weights for as long as you can, doing as many sit ups as you are comfortably able, sitting in a chair and raising your feet of the ground over and over, etc.

We all have different levels of ability and disability, so don't fret if you can't do much or as much as you wish. Start slow and gradually increase your routine if you can, make it a daily goal and stick with it. The idea is to find an exercise that works for you, set a goal and then commit to accomplishing it.

# Low Cost and Free Springtime Activities in Santa Clara County

By Monica M Macer

Spring has arrived! It's time to get out and explore the riches of nature that Santa Clara County has to offer. There are many different low cost or no cost activities that individuals can enjoy which are perfect for warm weather, green trees and budding spring flowers.

Enjoy the beauty of nature by visiting one of the many county parks offering accessible, paved trails. Vasona Lake County Park, located in Los Gatos, has 9.5 miles of tree lined, paved trails, which are wheelchair accessible. There are benches along the path for visitors to stop and rest, enjoying the view of the lake and ducks. The park also has public restroom facilities. Be aware that this park has a small fee for parking. Please call for details on fees and hours: (408) 356-2729.

Rancho San Antonio County Park is another wonderful place to visit. This beautiful park includes a combination of dirt and paved trails. The park includes Deer Hollow Farm, with a barn housing cows, goats, and pigs. There are picnic tables to relax and enjoy a snack. Remember, when hiking, make sure to take plenty of water, wear sun screen, and bring a small snack. Rancho San Antonio County Park offers wheelchair accessibility, public restrooms, and plenty of free parking. For more information, please visit [www.sccgov.org/sites/parks](http://www.sccgov.org/sites/parks), or call: (408) 355-2200.

Do you enjoy community, locally grown produce, crafts and live music? Visit one of the many Farmer's Markets in Santa Clara County. Farmer's Markets are held year round on various days of the week. For more information, locations, days and times visit: [www.pcfma.com/markets](http://www.pcfma.com/markets).

# Understanding the Role of IHSS In-Home Care Providers

By Shannin Prather

Clear communication is crucial between care recipients and their in-home care provider (IP) so that both parties feel satisfied with the relationship. It can be frustrating when a consumer feels that their IP is not meeting their expectations. Often, misunderstandings arise about the specific duties of the IP, and dissatisfaction results when expectations are not met.

It is very important to keep in mind that your IP will only be paid for services and tasks that have been authorized by IHSS. These tasks are itemized on your Notice of Action (NOA), along with the designated amount of time for each task. It is recommended that you and your IP review the NOA, and ensure that you both have a clear understanding of the expectations for care.

Your IP is not allowed to perform tasks that are not on your NOA. Unauthorized tasks may result in injury for which the care provider will not be compensated, either with pay or medical coverage. Any tasks not listed on the NOA are not covered by Workers' Compensation for any injury that may result. In addition, if your IP is injured performing an unauthorized task, you may be held liable.

Remember, services are not covered when you are hospitalized, in a nursing home, or on vacation. In other words, the in-home care provider cannot work when you are not home. Please review your NOA and if you have any questions about a service or task, call IHSS: (408) 792-1600.

Below are some services, tasks, and reimbursements which IHSS will not pay for:

- Gasoline, mileage, parking or public transportation costs
- Routine gardening or other outdoor work
- Pet care (feeding, clean up, or exercising)
- Moving furniture, boxes, etc.
- Washing walls, windows, or window coverings



- Household chores for visitors or family members who are not IHSS consumers
- Paying bills, or reading mail to consumers
- Care when the consumer is in the hospital or nursing home
- Time spent waiting at medical appointments
- Companion services or social engagements, including transportation to social engagements.
- Cleaning/shampooing carpets or rugs
- Transporting anyone other than the consumer
- Deep cleaning ovens
- Heavy Cleaning (Exception: One-time only with IHSS Social Worker pre-approval)

Note: Shopping and errands must be done at the nearest available stores that match the IHSS consumer's cost, nutrition and cultural needs. The IP is expected to shop without the consumer; extra time is not given for the consumer to shop with the provider.



## Important Phone Numbers

### Public Authority Services by Sourcewise

Information concerning provider benefits, Eco/Clipper 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 521

Representing providers. Call for information about the Union and payroll deductions.  
**(408) 678-3300**

### 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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