



# The Consumer Connection

Summer 2015

Public Authority Services  
by Sourcewise



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## Good News for IHSS Budget

By Mary Tinker

Finally there is some good news regarding the state budget for IHSS consumers and homecare providers. Governor Brown and Legislative leaders reached agreement on the fiscal year 2015-16 budget. It includes restoration of the 7% service hour reduction effective July 1, 2015. The Governor stated, "This is a sound, well thought-out budget." It saves billions of dollars and pays down debt, while directing more resources to schools and low-income Californians.

A few highlights of the budget agreement include:

- Implementation of the first-ever California Earned Income Tax Credit to help the state's poorest working families.
- Saving for a rainy day—the agreement saves \$1.9 billion in the state's Rainy Day Fund as required by Proposition 2.
- The Governor also called a special session to address financing of Medi-Cal. There are more than four million additional Californians receiving Medi-Cal coverage due to the expansion of health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act. The state's current managed care organization (MCO) tax structure fails to comply with new federal requirements, so a new structure needs to be developed to meet the increased need.



The FLSA Over-Time regulations for homecare workers court decision is expected sometime this summer. There is funding included in the budget to pay for it if the court decides the Department of Labor did not overstep their authority in the regulations. The Public Authority will post information on its website at [www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org) regarding the final decision and any potential impact for IHSS consumers and providers.

## Public Authority Enrollment

By Ryan Gallagher

Public Authority Enrollment assists In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) independent care providers (IPs) to become eligible to receive payment for services provided to IHSS consumers.

Here is a brief summary of the state mandated enrollment steps for IHSS IPs. The Enrollment Team is available to help with this process:

- A new IP starts by visiting the enrollment website, [ihss.pascc.org](http://ihss.pascc.org). To register, they complete the enrollment forms and watch the orientation videos on the computer.
- An IP must also attend a Public Authority Group Orientation for IHSS IPs, where an Enrollment Specialist will present helpful information and tips for receiving timesheets.
- IPs are also required to meet with an Enrollment Specialist during a one-on-one individual appointment. This is a great opportunity for an IP to ask any unanswered questions.



- All IPs must be fingerprinted in order to clear a Department of Justice criminal background check.

If you are hiring a new independent care provider, please be aware that the individual will need to complete all of the above steps in order to become an approved IHSS caregiver. Don't forget that the Public Authority Enrollment Specialists are here to help! You or your provider can contact us at (408) 350-3252.

## Responding to Drought Conditions

By Shannin Prather

As we continue in an unprecedented fourth year of drought in California, Governor Jerry Brown has ordered a reduction of water usage by 25% statewide. Cutting back on water usage is now a necessity. During droughts, water is precious, and we all need to take steps to conserve it.

Here are some simple tips to help with cutting down on household water use:

- Turn off your faucet when not actively using the water, for instance, while brushing your teeth and washing your hands.
- Shorten your shower by using a timer set at 10 minutes. Changing to a low flow showerhead will save up to 15 gallons of water in a 10-minute shower, and can cost as little as \$15.

- Water Your Garden After Sunset to reduce evaporation and allow more time to moisten plant roots, which allows you to cut back on how often, and for how long, you are watering.
- Reuse "Greywater" recycled from sinks, tubs, and washing machines. Collect this gently used water to reuse on plants and lawn areas.
- Flush Less. With each toilet flush, 3 ½ gallons of water is wasted, unless you have a low flow toilet.

Remember, it is important to drink enough water daily to stay healthy, so don't cut back on your drinking water! Finding ways to cut back on household water use will benefit everyone, during these dry California days. For more water news, visit [www.valleywater.org](http://www.valleywater.org)

# Health and Safety in the Home: Tips to Avoid Provider Injury

By Araceli Gaona

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumer is the primary employer of his/her provider and many responsibilities come with that role. One of the key responsibilities as an IHSS consumer is that you instruct and supervise the tasks that you have been approved for. This includes providing the proper tools to the provider and most importantly, training them on how to do them to ensure safety in the home.

It is important to provide your provider with gloves for house cleaning and personal care tasks. By using gloves, the provider is protected from chemicals used during cleaning and from any blood borne pathogens during personal care tasks. If your authorized services require help with transfers, repositioning, or lifting, tell your provider how much you weigh. Keep in mind that he/she may not feel comfortable lifting someone at a certain weight. In addition, make sure that you inform and train the provider on any assistive devices that are used, such as a Hoyer lift, sliding board, or gait belt. By providing your provider with this information, you will be protecting yourself and the provider from possible injury. Encourage the provider to be honest about their limitations to ensure safety for both parties.

In addition, avoid putting the provider in a situation where injury can occur. For example, do not ask the provider to get on a high ladder or an unsafe stepping stool to wash walls or windows. This is not an authorized IHSS service and it is putting the provider at risk for fall or injury, for which you as the consumer may be liable.

However, in the event that your provider is injured or becomes ill while performing an authorized task, the provider must immediately file a Worker's Compensation claim with IHSS. The provider will need to explain to IHSS the nature of the injury or illness, as well as when and how it happened. Your provider received written information explaining Worker's Compensation by mail, along with the Provider Notification that lists the authorized services.

The role of employer involves a lot of responsibilities and it may be an unfamiliar experience to some consumers. For any questions that arise regarding consumer responsibilities, the Public Authority Registry staff can assist. For information, call (408) 350-3251 and ask to speak to a Registry Specialist.

For any questions on Worker's Compensation, your provider can contact IHSS at (408) 792-1600.

## Fresh Food Alert



CalFresh, is a program that assists in stretching an already tight food budget. It can be used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and more. This program provides a means to improve your health and meet your nutritional needs.

If you have a limited income, you may be eligible. You are NOT eligible if you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Social Security Retirement benefits are okay If you are not sure which type of

benefits you receive, call the CalFresh Hotline for assistance (877) 847-3663.

You may apply online ([www.benefitscal.org](http://www.benefitscal.org)), or ask for an application to be mailed to you.

*If you have a limited income, you may be eligible.*

When you turn in your application, your county Cal Fresh office will call you to schedule an interview. You may request a phone interview or other accommodation.

# Important Information for Medicare/Medi-Cal Dual Eligibles

By Shelly Grimaldi, with Harbage Consulting and CalDuals CCI Outreach

If you are a Medi-Medi patient – someone with both Medicare and Medi-Cal – you have new health care choices as part of the Coordinated Care Initiative. No matter what choice you make, your IHSS services will stay the same as today.

This new option is called Cal MediConnect, and these Cal MediConnect plans will provide Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits, including Part D prescription drug coverage. These plans also provide you with added benefits such as transportation, vision care, and a care coordinator who can help explain and access

your benefits. Enrolling into a Cal MediConnect plan does not change your IHSS eligibility and you can still hire, fire, and manage your caregiver.

*Enrolling into a Cal MediConnect plan does not change your IHSS eligibility...*

Enrolling into a Cal MediConnect plan is voluntary, so you can choose to join or to opt out and receive your Medicare services as you do today. If you are eligible for Cal MediConnect and you don't make an active decision to join or not join, you will be automatically enrolled into Cal MediConnect on the first day of your birth month in 2015. You can choose to disenroll from Cal MediConnect in any month.

If you are a Medi-Medi, or if you care for someone who is, you can get help with questions about Cal MediConnect by contacting the following agencies.

- Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) is available to help you understand these changes and new options. HICAP provides workshops on Medicare issues, including Cal MediConnect, and also provides counseling to assist in understanding options. To talk with someone at your local HICAP you can call Sourcewise at 408-350-3200, option 2
- Health Care Options staff can also help you to understand these new options and Medi-Cal changes, and to enroll in the managed care or Medi-Cal program of your choice. They can be reached by calling 1-844-580-7272.
- Cal MediConnect Ombudsman Program helps beneficiaries voice complaints and solve problems with Cal MediConnect. If you need help with your services or your plan, you can reach Ombudsman services Mon – Fri, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. by calling 1-855-501-3077 (TTY 1-855-874-7914).

For more information on Cal MediConnect, please visit [www.calduals.org](http://www.calduals.org) or email [info@calduals.org](mailto:info@calduals.org) with any questions.

## IHSS Advisory Board

By Araceli Gaona and Fran Kiernan

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, is 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.

Let your opinions, concerns and ideas be a part of the monthly conversation. There are vacancies on the board for current or past users of in-home care. If you are interested in attending any of these meetings, or finding out how you might become a member of the board, you can call the Public Authority to confirm the meeting location: (408) 350-3286

We can't wait to meet you!

# Staying Healthy: Drink Plenty of Water

By Shannin Prather

Say 'Hello' to another beautiful Santa Clara Summer! As temperatures rise, remember to keep plenty of water in your system. Your body needs water to function properly. Water helps to maintain body temperature, remove waste, and lubricate joints. Staying properly hydrated (keeping enough water in your system) can even help you lose weight. Often, people mistake thirst for hunger, eating when the body needs water.

Poor hydration weakens the body's immune system, leading to an imbalance in your system, eventually causing illness. Lack of enough water can trigger daytime tiredness, short-term memory problems, and difficulty focusing.

Without enough water you can become dehydrated. Symptoms of mild to moderate dehydration may develop, including:

- Increased Thirst
- Feeling tired or sleepy
- Muscle Cramps
- Needing to pee less often
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Dry Skin

Don't wait until you notice these symptoms; avoid dehydration by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Adults should drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily. Children under twelve years should drink seven 8-ounce glasses of water, while those under eight years should drink five 8-ounce glasses daily.

Keep these tips in mind to stay hydrated, healthy, and safe, while enjoying the sunny, summer weather.

# The Importance of a Back-Up Plan

By Araceli Gaona and Fran Kiernan

As an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumer, it is critical that you have a back-up plan in place in case your regular provider is not available. Life circumstances such as illness, injury, or time off can create the unexpected need to have someone else assist you. It is your responsibility as the IHSS consumer to create a plan and have safety nets in place for this. Have family members or friends that are familiar with your care on notice, so that they may be called upon to help. Have the names and phone numbers of these individuals on hand and ready to go.

In addition, the possibility of new IHSS overtime rules will put a cap on how many hours your provider can work in a week. A ripple effect of this will be that your provider may not be able to work all your hours if they reach their maximum. You will need another provider as a back-up. It is highly encouraged that

you explore the idea of hiring an additional provider for this need, should it arise. Having two providers will ensure a smooth transition from one provider to another. It will turn what would otherwise be a daunting situation into a stress-free one. For assistance in hiring an additional provider, contact the Public Authority Registry (408) 350-3251 and ask to speak to a Registry Specialist.





# 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, 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**

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