



The Consumer Connection

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Public Authority Services
by Sourcewise



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Provider Wage and Sick Leave Increase

By Edith Gong

As of January 1, 2024, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Independent Providers (IPs) in Santa Clara County received a \$0.50 wage increase to \$19.54. This exciting news is due to the increase in the state minimum wage.

In addition, due to the passing of Senate Bill 616 (SB 616), paid sick leave for all IHSS IPs will increase from 24 hours to 40 hours every year. According to California Department of Social Services (CDSS), this increase to 40 hours of sick leave will begin on July 1, 2024.

The requirements for sick leave will not change:

- IPs will accrue sick leave after providing authorized IHSS services for 100 hours.
- Before accrued sick leave hours can be used, the IP must work an additional 200 hours or actively provide authorized services for 60 calendar days, whichever comes first.

These requirements only need to be met once. An IP who completes the requirements and continues to claim hours as an IHSS IP will continue to accrue hours of sick leave every year. If a current IP has already met these requirements, they do not need to do so again.

Any IP who stops being paid by IHSS for one year becomes inactive and would need to complete the requirements again to earn and use sick leave.

At the end of each State Fiscal Year on June 30, any unused sick leave hours expire. On July 1, a provider's available sick leave hours reset back to 40 hours.

Additional information and eligibility guidelines can be found here on the CDSS website: cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ihss-providers/resources/sick-leave.

Comfort Care During a Serious Illness

By Shannin Prather

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) refers to specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on relief from symptoms and stress caused by a serious illness rather than on curing an illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both the patient and their loved ones.



months or less. Hospice sees the dying process as a part of life and focuses on bettering the quality of remaining life with pain management, as well as the emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of the end-of-life process.

Many people may confuse palliative care with hospice or mistake palliative care for end-of-life care. However, palliative care can be provided alongside any type of care to treat and cure a condition. It is for people of all ages and in any stage of a serious medical condition.

Hospice is care that offers comfort and support to people facing a terminal illness and provides a system of care for those who have received a terminal diagnosis of six

Every person's needs are unique. Both palliative and hospice care teams work with the patient and those who care for them to develop a personalized care plan to ensure the patient and their loved ones are at the center of all decision-making.

To learn more about palliative care, ask your primary care doctor or specialist for a referral or visit [getpalliativecare.org](https://www.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.

How the Thyroid Impacts Your Body

By Vi Lam

The thyroid is a small butterfly-shaped gland that sits low toward the front of the neck. The thyroid produces hormones that control many important body functions, including metabolism and the way the human body uses energy.

The [American Thyroid Association](https://www.thyroid.org) reports that nearly 20 million Americans have some type of thyroid disorder, and it is estimated that as much as 60% of people with thyroid disease may be unaware of having the disorder. Thyroid disease can affect anyone at any age, and it can be present at birth or can develop as a person ages. It has also been found that women and individuals who are diabetic are at higher risk of developing a thyroid condition.

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Hypothyroidism is an underactive thyroid gland, which can make a person feel tired all the time, be uncomfortable in cold temperatures, possibly cause unexplained weight gain, and more.

On the other side, Hyperthyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland is making too much of the thyroid hormone, which can affect energy levels, make the heartbeat faster, cause weight loss without trying, and even cause feelings of anxiety.

If you are concerned about your thyroid, talk to your doctor. Learn more about the thyroid and how this small butterfly-shaped gland is important to your health on the American Thyroid Association website at [thyroid.org](https://www.thyroid.org).

Community Resource Highlight: Emergency Assistance Network

It is common to experience unexpected setbacks and money troubles from time to time. When an emergency appears, help may be needed to get an individual or family back on their feet. Santa Clara County has a place you can turn to if you find yourself out of other options.

The Emergency Assistance Network (EAN) may be able to offer services to prevent homelessness, avoid water and/or power shutoffs, and offer food security to assist qualified low-income residents recover from crisis situations. The EAN may also be able to provide some case management and financial planning and education.

The EAN may be able to support Santa Clara County residents with:

- Food assistance
- One-time rent or mortgage payments
- One-time water and/or power bill payment
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Direct financial aid for special issues, such as funeral costs
- Referrals to job training programs

To learn about EAN services and find out if you or someone you care for qualifies for assistance, connect with an EAN specialist by dialing 211.

Make Every Bite Count

By Vi Lam

Beginning in 1973, National Nutrition Month is celebrated every year in March. The [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) started this annual campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of nutrition and healthy diets.

Nutrition is important at every stage of life; it is never too early or too late to adopt a healthy diet. Having knowledge on what we put in our bodies can lead to a healthier lifestyle and help maintain wellbeing. Our bodies need a balance of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and proteins to work properly.

Poor nutrition can lead to various health issues, such as obesity. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reports that nearly \$173 billion per year is spent on healthcare for obesity in the United States.

In children, a nutritious diet can reduce the risk of developing some chronic diseases, such as diabetes, and encourages strong bones and healthy organs as they grow. For adults, a healthy diet can increase life span, lower the risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, Type 2 Diabetes, certain cancers, and help manage chronic conditions.

When possible, meals should incorporate fruits, grains, vegetables, and proteins. If dairy products are part of the meal, choose low fat or fat free options. When planning for your nutritional needs, keep in mind your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity, as these factors can vary widely from person to person.

Eating nutritiously doesn't have to be expensive. There are many budget-friendly food ideas and guides to food groups to discover on [myplate.gov](#). Start March off by learning how to make informed food choices and how to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits for a healthier you.

Access Assistance and Support for Veterans

By Shannin Prather



In the 2018 census, it was revealed that there were nearly 18 million military veterans living in America, ranging in age from 18 to over 100 years old. Veterans are part of a unique population with distinct cultural values, customs, codes of conduct, and patterns of communication that may be different from their civilian peers. This culture can also include higher than average obstacles to maintaining overall wellbeing, and some of these challenges may be lifelong for veterans.

The transition back to civilian life can look different for everyone. Military personnel who have returned home report experiencing a range of emotions from feeling relieved to be home and reunited with loved ones, to feeling anxious or stressed due to difficulties experienced while deployed. A significant percentage of veterans also report experiencing “survivor’s guilt,” which leads them to question their own survival while others they served with died. Survivor’s guilt can be a major symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

“I still have a lot of deployment related issues that crop up in my personal life, and I still miss my living and dead friends like I’ve never missed anything else...I often feel lost because I don’t know what to do without the support I had from those guys in my deployment...Most of all I feel angry at myself for feeling this way because, after 10 years, I shouldn’t,” writes U.S. Army veteran Tymon Kapelski in a [Quora](#) conversation about feelings veterans may experience when they return home.

The experience of military service can have a deep and lifelong impact, affecting veterans and their loved ones with sometimes devastating effects. Veterans tend to experience traumatic brain injury (TBI), PTSD, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders at higher rates than civilians. PTSD is often associated with TBI, military sexual trauma (MST), sleep problems, substance use, pain, and psychiatric disorders.

The [National Institutes for Health](#) (NIH) reports that a successful return into civilian life depends on providing veterans with training that builds on their military knowledge and skill, employment opportunities, homelessness prevention, and mental health programs that focus on transitioning back into civilian life. Support can be beneficial regardless of how much time has passed since military service ended.

Connecting with fellow veterans to discuss difficulties experienced in the transition back to civilian life may also ease some challenges and allow peers to offer suggestions and resources that have worked for them. Besides sharing resources, sharing stories and challenges can help lessen feelings of isolation and disconnection from civilian loved ones.

Veterans have expressed that difficulties returning to civilian life are varied and often unexpected. Many recently returned veterans report sudden moments of anxiety or panic experienced when out with friends or just after waking up because they can’t find their weapon or protective equipment.

Another unexpected challenge reported by recently returned veterans is the process of learning how loved ones may have changed and grown while the veteran was deployed. There may also be a lack of true understanding from society and loved ones on, not just the traumas of warfare, but the sharp and sudden contrast in routine and order experienced when a veteran returns from military deployment.

Neyl Gray, a Santa Clara County Navy SEAL Vietnam War veteran, believes more services and education focused on helping military families understand the specific needs and struggles their loved ones may experience should be made available before the Veteran returns home.

“When I first returned from Vietnam, I didn’t know how to function without the routine and regiment that had directed my every waking moment during my service,” Neyl explains. “I didn’t know how to develop a new routine. I didn’t know when to go to bed, or how to decide what I wanted to eat for dinner. I felt anxious in crowds, even when the crowd was made up of my friends. It would have helped us all if we had gone through some kind of training to help us reestablish our lives together.”



If you or someone you care for is a veteran in need of assistance to improve wellbeing, there are organizations ready to assist.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (calvet.ca.gov) assists with connecting veterans and their families to benefits and support.

The Santa Clara County Veteran Services Office (veterans.sccgov.org) is a county and state funded agency that helps veterans and active-duty service people and their spouses, dependents, and survivors file claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for compensation and benefits.

The Wounded Warrior Project (woundedwarriorproject.org) offers many free programs and services to veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001 and incurred a physical or mental injury, illness, or wound during or after services.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (va.gov) provides a variety of low-cost or free services to [eligible](#) veterans, including assistance in the transition to civilian life, mental health and MST care, health care, and more.

The American Legion (legion.org) embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities with several support programs and services.

For information and referrals to other supportive programs and services, speak with a Community Resource Specialist by calling the [Sourcewise Information & Awareness Program](#) at (408) 350-3200, option 1.



Public Authority Services

by Sourcewise



Public Authority Services by Sourcewise www.pascc.org
Phone: (408) 350-3206 Fax: (408) 296-8340 E-mail: 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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