

The Consumer Connection

Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy

One of the many programs available through the Council on Aging to assist seniors is called "HICAP" which stands for **Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program**.

How Can HICAP Counselors Help Me?

HICAP Counselors can explain:

- Medicare benefits
- Health insurance terminology
- Supplemental (Medigap) insurance
- Billing and claims procedures
- Long-term care insurance

HICAP Counselors can:

- Help you evaluate policies
- Assist on your behalf with providers
- Help with medical record keeping
- Provide the information you need to make informed decisions

HICAP Counselors will *not*:

- Charge for any service
- Sell any product
- Make your decisions for you

Medicare and your health insurance rights can be confusing. This program provides seniors with trained, unbiased counselors available at many locations throughout Santa Clara County who can meet privately with you to discuss Medicare health insurance.



HICAP Counselor Susan Rosenzweig (left) meeting at Council on Aging to review Medicare with a client. HICAP Counselors visit many locations throughout Santa Clara County.

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David Julian
Kai Lu
Bonnie Mello
Shannon Odam
Richard Patterson
James Ramoni (ex-officio)
Mary Jane Whiteford

The California Budget. Will IHSS be affected?

After many weeks of wrangling, state legislators are still stalled over the passage of the California State Budget with Democratic legislators wanting to pass measures to increase revenues and Republican legislators wanting to balance the budget through expenditure/service cuts and to add a spending cap for the future. Legislators continue to hold hearings as this newsletter goes out. Initially the Governor proposed significant cuts to the IHSS program and to provider pay rates. Later the review committees recommended against the cuts and the Democratic budget proposal rejected most cuts to the IHSS program. Watch your local and state news media for up to date information on the budget. The decisions your legislators make will be important for the IHSS program.

Are You Prepared for Emergencies?

Keep Page 3 & 4



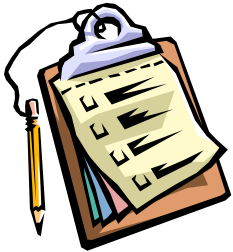
Keep the insert from this newsletter handy to remind you to get ready for emergencies! Pay particular attention to the medications or special equipment you need to keep you healthy and safe. What will you do if the power is out for several days? Plan ahead and be ready!



Urgent Care Registry: 408-590-0834

The Urgent Care Registry (UCR) is available to IHSS consumers who have at least 50 hours of authorized services per month, and have no one else capable of providing the service. The UCR fills in when the regular IP does not show up for work and the consumer has no one else to provide the service on a limited basis. The UCR does not fill in for vacations. UCR is available everyday between the hours of 6:00 am and 10:00 pm.

Call 408-590-0834 to contact the Urgent Care Registry.



Survey Results are In!

Thanks to everyone who filled in the survey form! We are very pleased to have received a very high overall satisfaction score of 4.48 out of 5. 60% of you report that you have employed the same provider for 1-5 years, 64% report that a family member is your caregiver. There are many other details and valuable comments provided from the survey that will assist the Public Authority Advisory Board to make their recommendations to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for program improvement. Thanks again for your help.



Provider Appreciation & Recognition

Is your caregiver one of the many exceptional and outstanding individuals that go above and beyond to keep you healthy and safe? So many are. Every year we like to recognize a few providers whose stories can inspire others. If you have a story about an outstanding caregiver you know, please share it with us. Write a short letter to: Public Authority Caregiver Stories at 2115 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95125 Be sure to include your caregiver's name and address.



High Gas Prices: Manage your Transportation Needs

Consumers should be mindful of the high cost of gas when asking their Independent Care Providers (IPs) to go grocery shopping and transporting you to medical appointments. The IP is not allowed to ask for money for any driving they are authorized by IHSS to do so they are not compensated for the cost of transportation. Therefore, grocery shopping should be done at the supermarket nearest to your residence once a week. A complete shopping list specifying items, quantity, and brand names will eliminate mistakes and frustration while cutting down on unnecessary multiple trips. Your thoughtfulness will be greatly appreciated by your IP.



IHSS Registry: Here to Assist You in Locating Providers

The Public Authority Registry recruits, screens and refers providers to consumers of IHSS. IHSS consumers should contact the registry when in need of someone to provide the services authorized by the IHSS social worker. The registry has the ability to match consumers with providers in their area and will send a list of individuals to call and interview. The registry is here to help! Call 408-296-8290 and ask for the registry.



TIPS FOR SENIORS

Before an Earthquake

- Eliminate hazards. Make it as easy as possible to get under a sturdy table or desk for protection.
- Secure special equipment such as telephones and tanks of oxygen.
- Keep a list of medications, allergies, special equipment, names and numbers of doctors, pharmacists and family members. Make sure you have the list with you at all times.
- Keep an extra pair of eyeglasses and medication with your emergency supplies
- Keep walking aids near you at all times. Have extra walking aids in different rooms of the house.
- Put a security light in each room. These lights plug into any outlet and light up automatically if power goes out. They operate for four to six hours and you can turn them off by hand.
- Make sure you have a whistle to signal for help

- Keep extra batteries for hearing aids with your emergency supplies. Remember to replace them annually.
- Keep extra emergency supplies at your bedside
- Find two people to check on you after an earthquake. Tell them your special needs, how to operate equipment you use and where you keep emergency supplies.

- Prepare to be self sufficient for three days

During & After an Earthquake

- If you are in bed or sitting down, do not get up
- If you are standing, duck and cover or sit down. You could be thrown to the floor if you are standing.
- Turn on your portable radio for instructions and news reports. For your safety, cooperate fully with public safety officials and instructions.
- Prepare for aftershocks by staying in a safe location
- If you evacuate, leave a message at your home telling family members and others where you can be found

- **For information and assistance in your area call 1-800-510-2020**



For information and assistance on services and programs in your area call 1 (800) 510-2020

TIPS for SENIORS

Prepare for Power Outages

You should:

- Listen to the media for current information on affected areas. Have a battery-operated radio available with an extra set of batteries.
- When an electrical outage does occur, turn off all appliances, computers, and all lights but one. That light will indicate when power has been restored.
- Keep a flashlight or lantern equipped with fresh batteries within easy reach. For people with limited reach or grasp, inexpensive battery-operated touch lamps are a good option. Such lights can be installed in areas of greatest use, and are small enough to be carried in an emergency. Do not use candles for heat or light, as they can be a fire hazard.
- Have a 10-day supply of prescription medications and durable medical goods and store them in a convenient location. A copy of emergency contact numbers and current prescriptions should be stored in the same location.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Refrigerated foods should remain safe to eat for several hours, and frozen foods should remain safe for an extended period. If in doubt about the safety of any food, throw it out.
- Find out what kind of telephone you have. If it is a cordless phone, it will not work during a power outage. Make plans to use an older telephone that just plugs into the wall. A cellular telephone or access to a nearby pay phone is also a good option.
- Be sure you know how to open your garage door if the power goes out.

If you are dependent on electrically powered breathing machines or other life-sustaining medical equipment:

- Work with your doctor, case managers and caregivers to develop a plan on what you will do if the power goes out
- Make sure you have backup batteries or generators available
- Contact the local electrical utility company and local public safety agencies in advance, if lack of electricity would create an immediate threat to life or safety
- Ensure that your house numbers are readily visible from the street to expedite emergency response
- If you or any member of your family has a life-threatening emergency, call 911

If you need additional information, contact your local Office of Emergency Services. In Santa Clara County: 408-808-7800

Get to know your Advisory Board: Bharat Desai

Bharat Desai is one of the 11 members on the Public Authority Advisory Board. He is a writer/poet with books published in both English and the Gujarati language whose writing reflects social messages regarding suffering people in society and solutions. Now retired, Bharat was a Senior Banker at one of the Government owned Banks in India where he was also involved during his professional career with social banking in order to serve the community and was closely associated with Lions Club service activities in India.

After moving to the USA he has worked with the India Community Center, California where he runs one of their programs for Indian American Seniors.

Bharat is proud to be associated with the In Home Supportive Services program as an appointee of the Board of Supervisors of Santa Clara County and to serve those in need of assistance to continue living safely in their homes.

We're so pleased to have Bharat's experience and expertise available to the Advisory Board!



TRAINING IS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR CAREGIVERS

Earn a Caregiver Certificate! Please call to register:

408-350-3206

Những cơ hội huấn luyện miễn phí cho nhân viên dịch vụ vẫn còn hiện hữu. Muốn biết thêm tin tức về các lớp học xin gọi để ghi danh. 408-350-3253.

Oportunidades de entrenamiento gratuito para proveedores de cuidado. Sigue disponible. Para inscripciones favor de llamar al 408-350-3206



Join us for a discussion of IHSS

WHAT: What is IHSS? How Does it Work? What is the Public Authority and How Can It Help Me? Get all your questions answered and concerns acknowledged.

WHEN: **October 15 1pm to 3pm**, Call us for additional future dates and times if that is not a convenient date for you.

WHERE: Council on Aging, Silicon Valley, 2115 The Alameda, San Jose

WHO: Consumers, your providers and family members.



PLEASE CALL TO RESERVE A SPOT AT THESE MEETINGS: (408) 350-3206

Do you live in Senior Housing? Are you involved with an Organization or Club? Would they like to learn about IHSS, the In Home Supportive Services program?

We welcome all opportunities to present on the IHSS in the community. Just give us a call at: 408-350-3206



IHSS Public Authority
2115 The Alameda
San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: 408-350-3206
Fax: 408-296-8340
Email: info@publicauthoritysantaclara.org
www.publicauthoritysantaclara.org

Important Phone Numbers



- Public Authority:** Call for information concerning provider benefits, Eco Pass, training or other services of the Public Authority. **408-350-3206**
- Registry:** Call if you want to join the Registry or to report any changes if you are already listed on the Registry. **408-296-8290**
- IHSS Social Services:** Call for information regarding authorized hours/services or to speak with a social worker. **408-975-4899**
- IHSS Payroll:** Call for any payroll matter. **408-975-4899**
- UNION SEIU Local 521:** Representing providers. Call for information about the Union & 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 or 1-800-414-2002**
- Information and Assistance:** Call to obtain information on available services in Santa Clara County. (In county only) **408-296-8290 or 1-800-510-2020**