

# LIVING WITH AUTHORITY

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY IHSS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY  
FOR ITS IHSS RECIPIENTS AND THEIR HOME CARE PROVIDERS  
**Spring 2009 VOLUME 6, NO. 2**

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Welcome to the spring edition of the Living With Authority newsletter. It is said that an optimist is the human personification of spring. Many of us eagerly anticipate the end of winter each year, and find the spring season full of hope, life and new beginnings. Although we are living through very challenging times, it is important to maintain balance in our lives and a positive outlook. We can do this by focusing on the things that make our lives and the lives of others more meaningful.

At the Public Authority (PA), we are committed to providing quality services for a valuable program. We find meaning in the notion that we can help IHSS Recipients and Home Care Providers (HCPs) live a better life. PA staff has been very busy handling recent program changes and developing new procedures to enhance our services. We recently implemented a Provider Enrollment pilot program and established procedures in compliance with a new law that will subsidize health insurance premiums to eligible HCPs. You can read more about these two initiatives on pages four and five of the newsletter.

Kristine Loomis, Chair of the Riverside County IHSS Advisory Committee, candidly shares her thoughts on the recent negative press coverage regarding the IHSS program. Kristine provides suggestions on what you can do to help raise awareness on the importance of the IHSS program. The IHSS program makes a difference in the lives of many seniors and people with disabilities by enhancing their quality of life so that they can remain safely and independently in their own homes. It also contributes to the economy by employing home care providers. However, it seems that not everyone is aware of the tremendous benefits that the IHSS program offers to those who need it and to our communities at large. How can you help? Write to your legislators and/or join the IHSS Advisory Committee. Please see the photo of our dedicated Advisory Committee members on page six and an invitation to join the IHSS Advisory Committee on page seven.

Speaking of making a difference, Leo Harrison, Deputy Director of Adult Services, reminds us that there is strength in numbers. If we each do something, even just one thing, collectively we can effect positive changes during these difficult economic times.

I am pleased to introduce our two new Administrative Services Managers at the Public Authority, Bob Hughes and Bobbie Rivas. Bob is in charge of Public Authority operations, including health

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## From the Director's Desk *continued from page 1*

Bobbie manages the Public Authority registry and training units. They have been on board since April and have been a great addition to our team. Please see pages four and five to read more about Bob and Bobbie, and their respective areas of responsibility.

Also featured in our newsletter are IHSS recipient Gladys Petrillo and home care provider Edith Martinez. Don't miss out on the "We Have a Match!" article by Roger Swalm, Community Program Specialist II with the Public Authority. This is just one of many success stories that serve as a reminder of how relevant our work is. Our Community Program Specialists often work hand-in-hand with Adult Services and IHSS staff to ensure that IHSS Recipients are matched with a HCP that will provide the services they need with a high degree of quality and compassion. We also work closely with IHSS Recipients in the hiring and selection of their HCP.

On page six of the newsletter, you will find useful information on how to keep your health benefit costs low. If you have Exclusive Care as your health insurance plan, be sure to read the article from Exclusive Care.

Last but not least, the back of the newsletter contains a list of Important Phone Numbers. Keep this list in a convenient place. We want to hear from you. Call us if you have questions about the services we offer and let us know if there are any specific topics you would like to see in future newsletters. Be well, until next time.



Anna L. Martinez  
Executive Director

## FROM THE IHSS ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S CHAIR



This spring IHSS came under scrutiny in the press, and articles were published in the LA Times and Sacramento Bee, which cast the program in a negative light. I personally believe that the articles were very one-sided and light on facts. That makes me angry. In this climate of severe economic stress and budget cuts it is very important that our legislators base their policies on fact, not anecdote and innuendo inflamed by the press.

The Advisory Committee is urging all of you to write to your legislators and send letters to the editor of your local paper letting the public know about the importance of the IHSS program. If you will take the time to do this, I will take the time to help you. Please feel free to contact me if you need assistance in writing a letter or finding the names and addresses of your legislators. Remember we are all in this together – take care of yourselves and each other!

Kristine Loomis  
IHSS Recipient, Riverside County IHSS Advisory Committee Chair

## OUR STRENGTH IS IN NUMBERS

It isn't news to anyone that our economy is having trouble and the leaders of our nation are looking at all of us to do our part. What is our part? If each one of us does something, will there be a noticeable difference?

I believe that the commitment we've made to serving the most vulnerable segment of our population was never based on the up turn or the down turn of the economy. It was based on our values and belief in humanity. When I started in this work, I made a commitment that I would do everything in my power to keep the people I serve healthy and happy in their own home. I will do my part to make the difference for them, and the 15,000 providers and hundreds more employees and partners that support In Home Supportive Services in Riverside County have already proven to do the same.



The economy has forced us to make some sacrifices and changes in our lives, but we still have made commendable strides in meeting our challenges. One area that we've immediately focused on is working even more closely with our partners. They are facing the same challenges as we all are, and they understand, better than anyone, what it means to be a strong team. A team so large and committed is a "Mighty Team". When we join our resources and work together, we build stronger bridges to cross from where we are to where we need to be. When we work together and share resources, everyone wins. The strength of our community is in taking care of those who need us. And with over 15,000 dedicated IHSS providers in our County I think it can honestly be said that "yes, we can make the difference!"

It was poet Edward Everett Hale, who wrote,

*I am only one,  
But still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything,  
I will not refuse to do something that I can do.*

**For information on community  
resources please call:**

**1-800-464-1123**

**For the elder abuse hotline  
please call:**

**1-800-491-7123**

I am confident that if we all do the "something" that we can do, we will see a positive change in our economy much sooner than the political pundits can predict. We can face these challenges as an opportunity to do our best and remember that we don't have to fix everything; we only need to do well what is ours to do. I thank all the providers and partners in In Home Supportive Services for their dedication and hard work in serving our seniors and people with disabilities, so they can keep their independence and live in their own homes. The work you do is honorable and very much appreciated. Thank you all.

Leo B. Harrison, M.S.W.  
Deputy Director— Adult Services Division  
Riverside County Department of Public Social Services

## HEALTH BENEFITS UPDATE

**New Administrative Services Manager of Operations at the Public Authority.** The Public Authority (PA) has added a new member to its management team – Bob Hughes. Bob is the new PA Operations Manager and comes to us with over 15 years of experience working with the County of Riverside in both the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Public Social Services. He has a degree in Financial Accounting and has worked as an Accountant II, Staff Analyst II, Sr. Program Specialist, Research Specialist and Supervising Research Specialist with a variety of programs in Administration. Bob's looking forward to serving the County and the PA's customers in his new role.

**The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).** COBRA provides Home Care Providers (HCPs) who lose their health benefits the right to choose to continue health benefits provided by their health plan for limited periods of time under certain circumstances. Qualified individuals are required to pay the entire premium for coverage. The ARRA adds premium assistance for COBRA benefits, which provides a subsidy of 65% of the COBRA continuation premium for eligible HCP who are involuntarily terminated between September 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009. Eligible HCP are responsible for paying the remaining 35% of the premium.

The PA Health Benefits Team identified over 500 HCP potentially eligible for this COBRA benefit and mailed eligibility information and enrollment forms to them on April 17, 2009. If you are a HCP and did not receive an enrollment package but think that you may qualify please feel free to contact the Health Benefits Team at the PA for eligibility and enrollment information.



***Health Benefits Team (left to right): Barbara Simpson-Lara-Admin. Svcs. Analyst II, Sandra Ochoa- Health Benefits Liaison, Bob Hughes-Admin. Svcs. Mgr. (Operations) and Belina Lopez- Sr. HR Clerk.***

## REGISTRY NEWS!



### **New Registry Administrative Services Manager at the Public Authority.**

The IHSS Public Authority (PA) has a new Registry Manager, Bobbie Rivas. Bobbie was selected to replace Linda Gort, who retired in March 2009. Prior to her new assignment, Bobbie served as Sr. Administrative Analyst and Acting Admin. Svcs. Mgr. over Operations running the PA's health benefits program. Bobbie has a strong commitment to maintaining the quality of the Registry and firmly believes in the PA's mission to help IHSS Recipients live as safely and as independently as they can while remaining in the familiar surroundings of their own home. "Providing screened and trained Home Care Providers (HCPs) is of utmost importance to help IHSS Recipients achieve quality care and an optimal level of dignity. Making the right match between the HCP and the IHSS Recipient is our main focus. Our training program is geared toward helping the HCP and IHSS Recipient receive vital education and resource information, which further helps the quality of life of the population we serve," Bobbie states.

**Provider Enrollment Pilot Program.** In an effort to enhance the IHSS program, the PA is piloting a Provider Enrollment program to serve the Moreno Valley and Jurupa IHSS district offices. For four months commencing May 1st, the PA will enroll PA Registry HCPs and IHSS Recipients (enrolled in the registry) who otherwise would have gone to either the Moreno Valley or Jurupa offices to sign up. This will speed up the enrollment process, thus helping the HCP, the IHSS Recipient, and assisting the workload of those IHSS district offices.

## WE HAVE A MATCH!

The Public Authority program is built on assisting IHSS Recipients to remain safely in their homes while assisting the needs of the Recipients that have been identified by the IHSS Social Worker. Considering this, the Public Authority continues to make great strides in ensuring that registered IHSS Recipients are being matched with diligent, hardworking Home Care Providers (HCPs) that are prepared to meet the need of authorized services.



Thanks to collaborated efforts between Adult Services, IHSS and the Public Authority we can ensure that the growing need of authorized services is being met with the utmost compassion, dignity and respect for all IHSS Recipients. For these reasons, we are happy to report that our collaborated efforts in recent weeks have solidified a match between IHSS Recipient Gladys Petrillo and HCP Edith Martinez. Gladys reports that she is happy and privileged to have her HCP Edith Martinez provide the authorized services that she desperately needs. Both parties have stated that they are happy, and they both feel this will be a lasting relationship that will be symbolic and reflective of the growing needs of IHSS Recipients in the present and more importantly in the future. We encourage all of our IHSS Recipients to strive for continued independence that will ultimately lead to a fulfilled life of enhanced well-being, health and happiness.

Roger Swalm  
Community Program Specialist II



## Help Us Keep Your Health Benefit Costs Low by Using Exclusive Care Network Providers.

Having a good health insurance plan at a reasonable cost is important to all of us. Home Care Providers who are enrolled in the health benefits program offered through the IHSS Public Authority realize the great value they are getting by using the medical services offered through Exclusive Care.

It is very important to remember that you must use only Doctors and Facilities that are in the Exclusive Care Network to avoid additional cost to you. Any time a Home Care Provider uses a medical facility that is not contracted with Exclusive Care, the Home Care Provider might have to pay for the care themselves. These are considered out-of-network providers, and using out-of-network medical providers is expensive for both the Home Care Provider and Exclusive Care. These costs are increasing the insurance cost to all members. And nobody wants to pay more for insurance!

Help all of us keep the costs of health insurance down by using those medical providers who are contracted with Exclusive Care. They are listed in your Exclusive Care directory but if you have any questions about which doctor to go to, call Exclusive Care directly at **1-800-962-1133**. They will be happy to give you current information about doctors and pharmacies in their network.

## MEET THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY IHSS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PA MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Back row** (left to right): **Rae Bell**-DPSS Delegate, **Anna L. Martinez**-Public Authority Executive Director, **Kimberly Schroff**-Member, **Gary Kelley**-Office on Aging Delegate, **Bob Hughes**- Public Authority Admin. Svcs. Mgr. (Operations ) and **Bobbie Rivas**-Public Authority Admin. Svcs. Mgr. (Registry). **Bottom row** (left to right): **Kristine Loomis**-Chair, **Felice Connolly**-Member, **Greg Mc Gargill**-Vice Chair and **Jim Collins**-Advocate Member. **Missing from photo:** **Julie Dixon**-Member and **Dwight Benner**-Secretary. **Vacancies:** Three (one Home Care Provider and one IHSS Recipient in District 1 and one IHSS Consumer in District 3).

# In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee

Open to the Public



**12125 Day Street, Suite S-101  
Moreno Valley, CA 92557**

**Monthly Meetings at Various Locations  
within Riverside County**

Please call for more information...

Ask for the Advisory  
Committee Chair  
or Secretary

**Phone: 1-888-470-4477**

## AN INVITATION

### **Volunteer Members Wanted**

Help us make IHSS Better!  
We are looking for new members  
IHSS Recipients & Home Care Providers

Your experience is valuable and can help others!

The IHSS Advisory Committee is an eleven member volunteer committee, comprised of IHSS Recipients, IHSS Home Care Providers, and other representatives from advocacy groups in an advisory capacity. We help make the program better by sharing our experiences, educating ourselves and the community about IHSS, and reporting to the various agencies and the Board of Supervisors.

Transportation for wheelchair or mileage reimbursement is provided.

**Be a Leader in Your Community**

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**ELDER ABUSE HOTLINE 1(800) 491-7123**

**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE 1(800) 442-4918**

**IHSS INFORMATION TOLL FREE 1(888) 960-4477**

**IHSS PAYROLL UNIT 1(800) 575-2588**

**EXCLUSIVE CARE 1(800) 962-1133**

**UNITED DOMESTIC WORKERS 1(866) 417-7300**

**OFFICE ON AGING SENIOR HELPLINK 1(800) 510-2020**

**IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY 1(888) 470-4477**

**IHSS ADVISORY COMMITTEE 1(888) 470-4477 ext. 227**

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION/EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION FOR IHSS HOME CARE PROVIDERS  
1(888) 470-4477**

**DIAL 2-1-1 from your residence or 1(800) 464-1123 from your cell or business line to get information on critical health and human services available in your community.**

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list or if you would like this newsletter in an alternate format, please contact Leti Galindo, IHSS Public Authority Program Specialist, by calling 1-888-470-4477 ext. 226.

### EN ESPAÑOL

Si desea ser removido de nuestra lista de correo o si desea obtener este boletín de noticias en Español, favor de contactar a Leti Galindo, Especialista del Programa de Servicios de Cuidado de Casa Personal de la Autoridad Publica al 1-888-470-4477 extensión 226.

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