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A Publication of In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority of Stanislaus County

Public Authority Opens its Doors

Link2Care, the In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority of Stanislaus County just celebrated its first year anniversary. So why haven't we heard more about it?

Establishment of the Public Authority was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 9th, 2004. The Board then appointed Jeff Lambaren as the Executive Director. Since that time, Jeff has been busy working with IHSS and Union staff to establish new services,

set up the new office, and hire staff.

In October 2005, two additional staff joined Jeff in the office at 305 Downey Avenue, with an accountant selected the following month. The Public Authority is now open from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

The Public Authority was established based on the recommendation of the IHSS Advisory Committee, which is made up of Providers and Recipients. They felt that a PA would allow



Providers better access to benefits, and give Recipients easier access to Providers.

On the next few pages, we hope to introduce you to who we are, what we do, and how we can help you access the benefits of In-Home Supportive Services Program.



Message from the Director

As the first Executive Director of Link2Care, the In-Home Supportive Service Public Authority of Stanislaus County, I feel a great sense of responsibility and opportunity; responsibility for creation of a new entity and opportunity to provide

new services for the citizens of the County. The immediate task is to make the Public Authority operational, which means the mundane tasks that make an office work; ordering supplies and stationary, making the computers operate correctly and getting a sign on the door. The next task for the Public Authority is the

assumption of the Registry services. The Public Authority is charged with operating a Registry. A Registry is a list of names of individuals who are willing to perform services for In-Home Supportive Service recipients.

Starting January 1, 2006,

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Meet the Staff

We are pleased to meet you! The Public Authority has four staff members here to serve you.

**Jeff Lambaren,
Executive Director:**

Jeff began his career in the medical field as a Respiratory Therapist. After many years, he returned to school and obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Upon graduation, he started working for Stanislaus County, and

has worked there for the past 16 years in various capacities. He worked as a Social Worker for Adult Services in the In-Home Supportive Services Program for two years, then returned to California State University, Stanislaus, obtaining a Masters Degree in Public Administration. Upon graduation he was fortunate to obtain a position in the Chief Executive Office where he learned many valuable management skills. During this time he also became involved with the In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee (IHSSAC), serving as Chairman for the first three years. As the opportunity for the Public Authority occurred, Jeff expressed his interest,

and was appointed as interim Executive Director and then finally as Executive Director July 25, 2005.

**Jennifer DeSanto,
Executive Secretary:**

Jennifer has been working for Stanislaus County for four years. She joined the Adult Services/IHSS team at CSA in July 2004, and continues that connection through her new position with the Public Authority. Jennifer brings over ten years of clerical experience to the job, and enjoys working with the public. She is excited about the opportunity to help our Providers and Recipients increase their access to benefits available through the IHSS program.

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Did You Know...

Insurance Is Available To Those Who Qualify

Q: How do you qualify for insurance?

A: You must work an average of 75 hours or more for a 3-month period.

Q: Once I enroll, what do I have to do to continue keep my insurance coverage?

A: You must continue to work an average of 75 hours or more every

month in order to continue to qualify for insurance.

Q: What do you mean by “an average of 75 hours or more?”

A: If you work 50 hours one month and work 100 hours each of the next 2 months, add them together: 50 + 100 + 100 = 250. Then divide that number by 3: 250 divided by 3 = 83.33...which is

more than 75 hours, so you qualify for insurance.

Q: Does the insurance stop as soon as you don't work 75 hours in a month?

A: No. The second month that your hours drop below the 75-hour average you will receive a letter warning that if you do not work an average of

Cont. pg. 4

If you are a Provider working 75 or more hours per month, you may qualify for insurance benefits.

IHSS Advisory Committee

<http://www.co.stanislaus.ca.us/IHSS/index.htm>

By Kenny Brown, Chairman

Since it was established in December of 2001, I have been a member of the IHSS Advisory Committee. In 2004, when Jeff Lambaren moved on to become the head of the new Public Authority, I took on the role of Committee Chair.

The IHSS Advisory Committee is a state mandated body, established by a bill called AB-1682. The function of the committee is to advise the Board of Supervisors about ways to improve the IHSS program. We have

also taken on the duty to keep the public informed about the IHSS program. We use our yearly budget to advocate at the County and State level to keep the IHSS program healthy.

At our monthly meetings we discuss many issues related to the operation of the IHSS program. We cover union relations, Provider wages and how we can improve the IHSS program. It is our goal to make the Stanislaus County IHSS program the best it can possibly be. Since the establishment of the committee four years ago, we have helped

secure increased wages and benefits for IHSS Providers, established the County Homemaker program to provide IHSS services on an emergency basis. We believe that one of the best ways to serve the Recipients of the IHSS program is to ensure that IHSS Providers have a good work environment.

While increased wages and benefits for Providers is a good place to start, the focus of our efforts is always the Recipients that the IHSS program serves. No matter what else happens, the Recipients needs come first.

IHSS Advisory Committee Members:

Kenny Brown, Chairman

Linda White, Vice Chairman

Jose Acosta

Madelyn Amaral

Dwight Bateman

Mary Burch

Rose Martin

Connie Muller

Ora Scruggs

George Sharp

Meet the Staff (Cont. from pg. 1)

Maria Osuna-Baldwin, Registry Specialist:

Maria has been with Stanislaus County for 17 years. The last 13 of those years were with Adult Services where she worked in the Multi-Purpose Senior Services Program, General Assistance and In-Home Supportive Services Program. She accepted a promotional opportunity with the Public Authority, where she works as a Registry Specialist. Maria is bilingual, English and Spanish, providing the Public Authority with an added asset. She has a friendly disposition and helpful attitude that makes her an easy person to ask for help with Registry or insurance questions.

Doreen Ott, Accountant III:

Doreen has been with Stanislaus County for 15 years. The last several years she has been the Accountant Lead for In-Home Supportive Services, Adult and General Assistance programs. She has also been the interim accountant for the Public Authority this past year. She has recently joined the Public Authority team as the permanent accountant. Doreen brings a wealth of knowledge in regards to budgeting and expenditure monitoring for the adult programs and she is looking forward to the challenges of providing fiscal oversight for the Public Authority.

Message from the Director (Cont. from pg. 1)

the Public Authority assumed direct operation for the Registry.

In the future, the Public Authority will work on the creation of a website, and contract negotiations with the Providers union, the United Domestic Workers of America.

NewsFlash!

IHSS Providers received a raise Dec. 1 to \$8.25 per hour!!

IHSS Registry Available

“The purpose of the registry is to help connect providers needing more hours with recipients needing quality care.”

As of January 1, 2006, Link2Care (the IHSS Public Authority) has assumed operational responsibility for the Registry.

This has required the creation of a brand new registry. If you were previously on an IHSS registry, you must contact us and re-apply to be on

the new registry.

What is a Registry?

The Registry is a list of Providers in our County who have been screened and trained and are available to work for IHSS Recipients.

What are the requirements to be on the Registry?

You must complete an application, pay \$42 to undergo fingerprinting and a background check, and complete a free training course.

What is the work like? IHSS Providers work in IHSS Consumers' homes, performing domestic and

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Open Enrollment is Coming!!

Open Enrollment is coming soon. If you are a caregiver currently receiving health benefits, you must re-apply during this time. If you are a provider who does not have benefits, but would like to apply, you can call our office to see if you are eligible, and then be placed on our waiting list.

More information will be mailed to you – keep an eye on that mailbox!

If you are currently receiving health benefits, you must re-apply during open enrollment.

Health Benefits (cont. from page 2)

75 hours or more in the next month your insurance will be terminated.

This gives you the opportunity to increase your hours and remain qualified for insurance.

Q: What does this insurance cost?

A: The monthly premium is \$20.00. The co-payment for Primary Dr. visits and prescriptions are \$20.00. The co-payment to see the dentist is \$5.00.

Q: How do I pay it?

A: The \$20.00 premium is deducted from your check every month.

Q: What kind of insurance is it?

A: It is medical and dental for the employee only.

Q. Can all eligible providers receive health benefits?

A: Unfortunately, no. We are limited to the number of providers that can sign up for insurance. The Public Authority obtains funding for benefits based on the number of hours worked by IHSS Providers each month. We receive 60 cents for each hour worked. This amount does not cover the premium payment for all eligible providers, so we must divide the amount of premiums into the amount of money we receive, which limits the number of insurance enrollees.

Q: How do you sign up?

A: Call Public Authority at 558-4881 and we will verify your eligibility. If you are eligible, you will be placed on the waiting list if there is one, or will be sent an application if there are slots available.

Apple Hill Cake – Warm up Winter!

Here is a delicious apple dessert that's easy to make and a great way to warm up those cold winter days.

Ingredients Needed:

2 cups sugar
 ½ cup oil
 2 eggs
 4 cups diced apples
 2 cups flour
 1 tsp salt
 2 tsp cinnamon
 1 tsp nutmeg
 2 tsp soda

Combine the sugar, oil and eggs in a large bowl. Once combined, fold in the apples. Sift together the remaining ingredients and mix.

Pour into a 9" x 13" greased cake pan and bake for one and a quarter hours in a preheated oven at 350° F.

Serve hot or cold, with or without whipped cream or frosting...it's good any way you serve it!!!



Do you have a story, tip, or idea you'd like to share in the newsletter?

Link2Care would love to hear from you! We are especially interested in hearing about great service from providers, tips on care giving, and encouraging stories.

Write us at:
 Link2Care Newsletter
 305 Downey Ave.,
 Modesto, Ca 95354

Health News: Colds and Flu

It's that time of year! Sniffles, coughs and aches are upon us. How do you know if what you have is a mild cold, or something more serious? Here are some tips to help you recognize symptoms and combat them.

A cold develops gradually. Initial symptoms of runny nose, sneezing, and chills are followed by coughing, headache, sore throat, loss of appetite, and nasal discharge. If fever is present, it will be low-grade (less than 101 degrees).

By contrast, the flu most often hits abruptly, with a sudden high fever, dry cough, and headache. Other symptoms may include muscle aches, weakness, a sore throat, runny nose, and red, watery eyes that are sensitive to light.

Both colds and flu's are viral infections, so there is no cure. However, symptoms can often be alleviated by over the counter medications. The best treatment for these illnesses is prevention.

Flu shots are available, but they are not for everyone. See your doctor if you think this may be an option for you or your family.

Good health habits can also help decrease your risk. See the information on the right for tips on prevention.

If you or a loved one does get sick, knowing when to see a doctor can be difficult. Here are guidelines for when a physician may be needed:

- ✓ Symptoms last longer than 10 days.
- ✓ You have a severe sore throat, earache,

or headache not relieved by acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

- ✓ You have severe chest pain or shortness of breath.
- ✓ You are coughing up thick, green or bloody sputum.

Remember, there may be other conditions that require a doctor's care, and you should not hesitate to call if you feel a physician is needed.

Keeping yourself and those around you healthy this winter should be a top priority. Take care of yourself by drinking plenty of fluids, getting plenty of rest, and following good health habits.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Tips to Prevent Cold & Flu Exposure:

- ✓ Wash your hands frequently.
- ✓ Avoid close contact. Avoid people who have symptoms. If you are showing symptoms keep your distance to protect others from illness.
- ✓ Stay home when you are sick.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Public Authority of Stanislaus County

305 Downey Ave.
Modesto, CA 95354

PHONE:
(209) 558-4787

REGISTRY OR BENEFIT
QUESTIONS:
(209) 558-4881

FAX:
(209) 558-4612

La oficina de Public Authority trabaja con proveedores y clientes de IHSS. Tenemos servicios de el Registro y seguridad para proveedores. Para mas información en español llame a 558-4881.

IHSS Registry Available (Cont. from page 4)

personal care tasks. Care ranges from simple domestic chores to personal care. Domestic chores include: vacuuming, dusting, laundry and meal preparation. Some Consumers require more care, such as assistance in and out of the bathtub, help with dressing and grooming, assistance with ambulation and other personal care.

What is the rate of pay?
As of December 1, 2005, Providers receive \$8.25 per hour. Additionally,

Providers who work 75 hours or more per month for three consecutive months qualify for health insurance.

How do you sign up?
Call the Public Authority at 558-4881. We will explain the process for meeting the requirements and make an appointment for you to come in and fill out an application.

Do you have a question you need answered?

We'd love to hear from you. Please write us at:

*The Authority Answers
305 Downey Ave.
Modesto, CA 95354*

We will do our best to answer your questions in the next edition of Link2Care.

LINK2CARE

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305 Downey Ave.
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