

Living Independently

FALL
2007

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY PUBLIC AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bob bids us farewell

by Jackie Johnston, Public Information Office, Employment & Human Services



Bob Sessler honored for his years of service to the county by Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Mary Piepho, Federal Glover, John Gioia, Gayle Uilkema and Susan Bonilla.

Could it be that we've seen the last of Robert Sessler? Not likely! Officially, Bob retired in August as the Director of Contra Costa County's Aging & Adult Services. But he says, "I'm not completely ready to retire. I'm sure I'll be making an appearance here from time to time to help with the transition. It's a reality of our personnel system. Also, having a workforce of retirees as part-time workers is a strength of our bureau." One can't help but think of the words of The Terminator's Arnold Schwarzenegger: "I'll be back."

Bob can't explain exactly when he decided to devote his career to working with seniors and disabled adults. In 1976, he was working at 1305 Macdonald Avenue in Richmond, in the Information & Referral

Provider Recognition Event November 28, 2007

The IHSS Public Authority Advisory Committee and United Health Care Workers-West are collaborating on an event to recognize and celebrate the contribution made by IHSS providers to the well being of the IHSS consumers they care for. Details will be mailed separately.

If your provider is exceptionally kind, helpful and considerate, and you want him or her to be recognized at the Provider Recognition Event, give the Public Authority a call or send us a note. All comments will be included in a booklet to be distributed at the event.

Sandra Hare, Registry Specialist, is collecting all your comments. Write, call or email: Public Authority, Attn: Sandra Hare, 1330 Arnold Drive, Suite 143, Martinez, CA 94553 phone: (925) 957-7520 e-mail: share@ehsd.cccounty.us

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Consumer over 60
Ethel Dotson
Committee Chair
Richmond

Consumer over 60
Bertha Stobb
Pittsburg

Consumer over 60
David Thayer
Oakley

Consumer under 60
Cathy Cratty
Antioch

Consumer under 60
Michael Fernandes
Brentwood

Consumer over/under 60
Position vacant

District I
Ida Miles
Representative of a
Community-based
Organization

District II
Position vacant

District III
Joan Weber
Advocate for Elders
Walnut Creek

District IV
Paul DeMange
Advocate for people
With disabilities
Pleasant Hill

District V
Sydney Anderson
Social Worker
Pittsburg

IHSS Advisory Committee welcomes Sydney Anderson

Sydney Anderson was recently appointed by Federal Glover, County Supervisor from District V, to fill a vacant position on the IHSS Advisory Committee. Sydney is currently a social worker at Stoneman Village, a residential program for seniors and persons who are handicapped, in Pittsburg.

Prior to moving to East Contra Costa County, Sydney was involved in various community groups and activities for older adults in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. She continues her community involvement in this county. She served on the Delta Community Services, Inc. Board of Directors for five years, and is currently on the Board of An Elderly Wish Foundation. Sydney was chair for two years of the East County Senior Coalition and currently serves as secretary. Sydney also continues to organize the East County Networking Group for professionals in the field of aging.

Through her position at Stoneman Village, Sydney works with many IHSS care providers and clients in the IHSS program. She has become very familiar with the policies and procedures of IHSS and has communicated with both the Public Authority and IHSS staff to help resolve issues.

“I find gaining new knowledge very stimulating and I enjoy sharing what I have learned for the purpose of assisting older adults,” says Sydney. “I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the Contra Costa County Public Authority Advisory Committee to learn more about the program and contribute to its improvement.” 🌟



Contra Costa County In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee

Since the year 2000, the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Committee has provided the Board of Supervisors, the Public Authority and the IHSS program with advice and recommendations on issues related to In-Home Supportive Services delivery and program administration. Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. The Advisory Committee meets 10 months of the year on the third Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. There are no meetings in July or December.

There is time on the agenda each month for public comment. This is the time for members of the public to voice ideas, suggestions, and concerns.

If you are a current or former IHSS consumer and are interested in future openings on the Committee, please call Fran Smith at (925) 957-7527 and ask for an Advisory Committee Member application. 🌟

Together we can manage Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a treatable illness marked by extreme highs and lows in mood, thought, energy and behavior. The low symptoms are called depression and the high symptoms are called mania. How can caregivers best help their consumers who have bipolar disorder? When problems arise, it is effective to set up a time and a quiet place to talk with your consumer. Use eye contact, be kind and direct, and identify the problem. Ensure that you have correctly understood what the consumer has to say. Work together to try to reach a realistic solution.

When your consumer is having a difficult day, give words of encouragement letting him/her know that things will work out. You may want to check with your consumer to ensure he/she has taken his/her medication. If not, gently remind your consumer that medicine can make a dramatic difference. Don't expect your consumer to "snap out of it" and don't minimize the symptoms of depression. No one likes being depressed.

- Keep your voice calm.
- Never yell or shout.
- Don't over-react.
- Remain steady.

If your consumer verbally abuses you during times of depression or mania, don't demand an apology. It is the "illness talking." Wait until the consumer is feeling better to discuss any insults or taunts. Mania can be scary for your consumer. During episodes of mania your consumer may not be able to relax, sleep or keep still. Encourage your consumer to participate in his/her normal daily activities as best he/she can. Additionally, encourage your consumer to wait on making any major decisions when his/her mood is unstable.

Always treat your consumer with dignity and respect. Set clear, consistent limits. Do your best to see that your consumer gets his/her sleep, eats properly, is taking his/her medications and stays safe. 🌟

Reprinted with permission from Sacramento County IHSS Public Authority, Caring Matters Summer 2007.

RAPID RESPONSE PROGRAM

A service for IHSS consumers, an opportunity for IHSS providers.

The demand for Rapid Response service is growing quickly. Consumers are pleased to know that there is a program in place for a back-up caregiver when their regular providers are out sick or unexpectedly unable to come to work.

Consumers are assured that they can still have access to quality personal and domestic care within a time frame that meets their needs. Since the Rapid Response Program started in October 2006, more than 100 consumers have used the service.



**Cynthia Sokoya,
Rapid Response Dispatcher**

More and more providers are very happy to know that they don't have to feel guilty for taking time off from work due to illness or other emergencies, knowing that the Rapid Response Program will provide experienced in-home care providers to fill in. Providers are relieved they won't have to leave their clients helpless when they are sick or on vacation. Rapid Response Providers are eager to work, performing IHSS authorized tasks with eligible consumers. They are paid IHSS wages (\$10.50/hr), receive a \$20 stipend for arriving at the home of the consumer within two hours of the call, and are reimbursed for round trip mileage from their home to the consumers' homes.

If you are an in-home caregiver with a minimum of two years' work experience with IHSS, have an automobile, and willing to serve any consumer in one or more of the geographic areas of Contra Costa County, please call to join our network of Rapid Respond Providers.

For more information about this program, call Cynthia Sokoya at (925) 957-7536 or (800) 333-1081. 🌟

Provider time sheets and paychecks

Did you know?

- The IHSS pay periods are from the 1st of the month to the 15th and from the 16th to the end of the month. Turning in timesheets before the end of the pay period could delay your paycheck.
- Using a pencil to complete a time sheet is not okay. Always use a pen.
- Using correction fluid to correct a mistake is not okay. Always cross out the mistake, re-write the number and have the consumer initial the correction.
- Including more hours on the time sheet than are allocated to the consumer for that pay period is not okay. Payroll will pay no more than the hours allocated.
- Time sheets must be signed by both the provider and the consumer, or the consumer's representative. If a signature is not on the time sheet, payroll can not issue a paycheck.
- There are three ways to turn in your time sheets:
 1. Use the U.S. Postal Service to mail time sheets to: PO Box 2799, Martinez, CA 94533-7795.
 2. Use the drop box at the IHSS Payroll office at 30 Muir Road, Martinez.
 3. Use the drop box at the Public Authority office at 1330 Arnold Drive, Suite 143, Martinez, Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
- Time sheets left in the drop box at the Public Authority will be taken daily to the payroll office.
- Payroll clerks key the time sheets into the state payroll system and the information is sent electronically to the State Controller's office in Sacramento. Paychecks are processed by the state in three working days. Paychecks are mailed to the providers from Sacramento. (Weekends and Holidays will delay the process.)
- The busiest times for payroll clerks are from the 16th to the 18th and from the 1st to the 3rd of each month. They process about 6,500 time sheets each pay period.
- Questions about late or missing time sheets and paychecks can be answered at the Payroll Call Center, 1 (800) 333-1081. Call Center staff will be able to answer routine questions or direct them to the most appropriate person. 🗣️

SEIU–UHW Steward Contacts

Mildred Brown (510) 758-7945
Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, El Sobrante, Pinole, Hercules, Rodeo, Crockett

Mary Harms (925) 914-1490
Concord, Clayton, Oakley, Brentwood, Bethel Island, Discovery Bay

Selice Nelson (925) 706-8521
Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg

Maureen Ryan (925) 671-2311

Dan Villasenor (925) 408-8262
Spanish and English for Concord and Clayton

Hilda Martinez (925) 565-2120
Spanish

If you can't reach the Union Steward, call the Union Representative

Corine Picou (510) 869-2285
Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, El Sobrante, Pinole, Rodeo, Crockett, Orinda, Lafayette, Moraga, Alamo, Danville, Blackhawk, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek

Antonio Abarca (510) 869-2231
Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Pacheco, Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg, Discovery Bay, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Oakley, Clayton, and Walnut Creek (94548)

For questions regarding union deductions, call UHW Toll Free: (800) 585-4250

For information on the Pension Plan, call (800) 458-1010

We don't want to lose you...

REMAIN ACTIVE!
Call Every 2 Weeks

The Public Authority Registry receives calls every day from IHSS consumers who want help finding a provider to work for them. The Registry needs reliable providers to refer to these consumers.

Providers on the Registry must call every two weeks to update their availability. If you do not call every two weeks your name will be "lost" and will not appear on the lists of names that are sent to consumers.

Call (800) 333-1081
to remain active

Caring for wheelchair users

Many consumers who ambulate by the use of wheelchairs would like their caregivers to be better informed about providing care for people who are wheelchair users. Consumers are responsible for keeping their wheelchairs properly maintained and in safe working order, but most rely on their caregivers to keep their wheelchairs clean. According to one IHSS consumer, many of her caregivers assist her with bathing and help her put on clean clothes but forget to clean her wheelchair.

Consumers who are dependent upon a wheelchair find themselves eating in their chair, spilling things on their chair, and sometimes having bowel or bladder accidents in their chair. For non-wheelchair users, try to imagine sitting at your kitchen table everyday and never wiping it down, never throwing the table cloth in the washing machine, or not sweeping or mopping the floor. Most likely, after a short while the area that we used daily but did not wash properly would start to smell and look dirty. The same goes for wheelchairs. They need to be kept clean.

The following are some wheelchair cleaning tips for caregivers:

If your consumer has an accident in their chair and the pad gets soiled, check to see if it is a pad that can be pulled off and thrown in the washing machine. Use regular laundry soap and fabric softener to give the pad a fresh, clean smell. It is a good idea to let the pad hang dry, preferably outside, overnight.

For wheelchairs without pads, caregivers can use a spray cleaner (i.e., Mr. Clean, 409, Lysol, Pinesol) and lightly spray the seat portion of the chair and wash with a damp cloth. Be very careful about using liquids on electric wheelchairs. It is best to use a damp cloth to thoroughly wipe down soiled areas on the chair.

In an effort to prevent the chair pad from getting soiled, you can place a plastic bag over the seat pad and then cover the pad with a soft towel. This will enable faster clean-up and protect the chair pad.

Chair pads should be replaced at least every two years, especially for consumers who must use the wheelchair every day. Consumers can ask their doctor to prescribe a new pad for their chair.

It is safe to clean the arm rests, foot rests and outer portions of the chair with a warm, damp cloth using common cleaning solutions. Check with your consumer about specific allergies to different solutions first.

Caregivers also need to know how important it is to frequently move and reposition consumers who are non-ambulatory wheelchair users. Never leave your consumer in their wheelchair for long periods of time, as this can cause pressure sores. It is important to allow periods of time throughout the day for the consumer to relax on their bed or in other furniture within their home.

Keeping your consumer's wheelchair clean and their body repositioned are key points when providing care for consumers dependent upon wheelchairs. 🧡

Reprinted with permission from Sacramento County IHSS Public Authority, Caring Matters, Summer 2007.



Libraries come to you!

If you think your local library is only full of books, you haven't visited a library lately. Materials at libraries today include audio tapes, videotapes, audio CDs and video DVDs, as well as Large Print books. You can find what you want online and even have it delivered to you for a small fee. Many seniors and people with disabilities can utilize libraries without ever needing to go into their local branch. All you need to do is get a free library card, and start discovering the treasures in your library today.



Large Print books for people with vision limitations

Books with larger type are available in most library locations,

and include both fiction and non-fiction titles. If you are in a local library branch, ask a librarian where they are shelved. If you have internet access, you can also search for Large Print books in the online Library catalog.

Audio books on cassette tape or CD

Audio books are circulated throughout the library system and can be requested at any branch. You can also search for audio books online.



Digital audio books from the Califa Digital Library Consortium

The consortium allows online library users to download audio eBooks. The digital library contains titles in bestsellers, classics, fiction and non-fiction. These digital books check out for three weeks, and are checked back in automatically, so you never incur late fees.

Videos and DVDs with closed captioning for the hearing impaired

Closed captioned DVDs and videotapes can be found and requested online through the library catalog.

Described videos and DVDs

These types of videotapes and DVDs contain a special audio track and are available for visually impaired people. You can find them in the online Library Catalog by using a keyword search that includes the term "described video."

Contra Costa County libraries also provide options for having books delivered to you if you cannot make it to the library on your own.

Books by Mail

For a small delivery fee, you may request this service over the phone by calling 1 (800) 984-4636. You can also ask for this service while at your local library. Or, once you've placed a book on hold through the library catalog, you can choose the MAIL option when you're asked to select a pick-up branch.

Books for the Homebound

If you are home- or institution-bound, volunteers can bring many of the books and other materials we've described to you. These volunteers deliver to Contra Costa County residents within the library service area for free. If you or someone you know could benefit from the "Books for the Homebound" service, contact Patty Chan, Community Outreach Librarian at (925) 927-3211, or pchan@ccclib.org.

Rossmoor Books-To-Go

This free service is provided by the Walnut Creek library and volunteers from the Rossmoor community. If you live in Rossmoor, and have a valid library card, you may use this service. Call or visit the Walnut Creek library for more information.

For more information on these or other services at your library, contact the Contra Costa County library at www.ccclib.org or 1 (800) 984-4636. You can also find listings for the numbers of your local branches in your phone book in the blue government pages. 📞

Antioch Library



Acting head librarian Greta Galindo shows some of the choices in large type books.

The librarians at the Antioch branch are working hard to encourage you to make a visit this fall. The Antioch library is located at 501 West 18th Street in Antioch, and is on the Tri Delta Transit bus lines 380, 388 and 392. Adult Services Librarian Kathy Middleton is always coming up with innovative ideas to encourage everyone to make the most of what the library has to offer. If you missed the summer reading programs this year, don't worry! They'll be back again next summer. There was even a summer reading program for developmentally delayed adults, which was a great success for ARC Inroads and ALIVE participants. But fall is upon us now, and there are new reasons to come to the library in Antioch.

FILM NOIR for Senior Citizens

On Thursday, October 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Antioch Library is featuring FILM NOIR for Senior Citizens. What is film noir? Come out and see for yourself! It is a genre that has gained a new appreciation and a new audience in recent years. After a brief introduction to the genre, you'll watch a classic film noir, served up with movie munchies.

Internet Docent

Every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., you can receive one-on-one internet instruction at the Antioch branch. You'll learn the fundamentals of Internet searching or how to set up a free email account. Call the branch at (925) 757-9224 to set up a one hour appointment.

Knitting

The third Saturday of every month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., join other interested knitters and see if you can make warm socks before winter! All levels of knitters are welcome, from novices to advanced yarn wranglers.

Scrapbooking

Once a month on Saturdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., scrapbookers converge at the Antioch branch. The exact Saturday is announced in the library newsletter and online, or you can call the branch at (925) 779-0481 for details. Bring photos and your creative ideas for displaying them.

Volunteers welcome

Greta Galindo, Acting Branch Librarian of the Antioch library, would like you to know that volunteers are always welcome. Greta offers that there are ways to volunteer without needing to make a huge time commitment. Many seniors and others help by mending and shelving books at the branch. If you like to exercise your creativity, there are opportunities in art and bulletin board display too. Each year, hundreds of volunteers make a tremendous difference in our community libraries. "Project Second Chance" volunteers help with one-on-one literacy tutoring for adult learners. "The Friends of the Library" support and promote their local library branch with book sales and fundraisers. Or, if you'd like to volunteer for the "Books for the Homebound" program, "Homework Help" to students, or "Stories To Go" for preschool age children, the Antioch library, or a branch library near you, can use your help. You can also go to the library website at www.ccclib.org to read more about volunteer opportunities at Contra Costa County libraries, or ask a librarian about volunteering the next time you are in a library. They would love to hear your ideas. 🐾



Librarian Kathy Middleton with her summer reading program, InvestiGATORS.

NUMBERS

IHSS is a program of and for people. Here are some interesting numbers about IHSS.

Test your knowledge of what the numbers are in Contra Costa County by matching the correct number (from the column on the right) to each question.

Choose from these numbers

6,618,289
18
1021
691
6,677
2,274
6,018

1. How many IHSS providers were there in Contra Costa County in July 2007? _____
2. How many IHSS consumers were there in Contra Costa County in July 2007? _____
3. How many calls were received by the Payroll Call Center from providers asking about their time sheets and paychecks in July 2007? _____
4. How many calls were received by the Public Authority Registry requesting a list of providers from January 2007–July 2007? _____
5. How many new IHSS providers attended New Provider Orientations from January 2007–July 2007? _____
6. How many Workers Compensation claims were reported from January 2007–July 2007? _____
7. How many IHSS hours have been served to IHSS consumers from January 2007–July 2007? _____

7. 6,618,289

6. 18

5. 691

4. 1,021

3. 2,274

2. 6,677

1. 6,018

Answers



At last, all the answers to all your questions!

Dear Zelpha...

Dear Zelpha,

I've been working for IHSS for about five years now for two ladies who live in my neighborhood. I was hoping to get another client, and when I called the Public Authority to ask for more work, they told me I wasn't on the Registry. I don't understand. How can I be working for you guys for all this time but not be on the Registry?

—*Confused in Crockett*

Dear Confused, Great question! You can be working for IHSS and not be on the Registry, and I will tell you how. When you sign up to work for someone you know, such as a neighbor, family member or friend, you don't go through the Registry. You simply notify the Public Authority and complete a Personal Care Services Program Provider Enrollment Agreement, also known as an Enrollment Packet. If it is your first time as a provider, you will attend a New Provider Orientation, where you will receive your Enrollment Packet, which is the paperwork that tells payroll you are the IHSS provider for the specific person you're working for.

The Provider Registry is a referral service for consumers who do not know anyone to hire as their IHSS provider. These consumers call the Registry at the Public Authority for a list of providers. The providers that the Registry refers are those who have successfully completed the Registry acceptance process, which includes a Registry application detailing your work history, attending a Registry Orientation (3-hour training), and providing the Registry with two verifiable positive work references and one personal reference.

Once the consumer receives the Registry list, the consumer calls the providers, interviews them, and decides which provider to hire. At that point, the enrollment process is the same as described above, except that Registry providers do not need to attend the New Provider Orientation, since they have already completed a Registry Orientation.

If you would like to apply to be on the Registry, please stop by our office for an application, or call our Office Manager (925-957-7522) and we will mail one to you.

If you have a question for Zelpha, our Registry Expert, call us toll free at (800) 333-1081.

Earth's easiest exercise

From Top Health News

Walking can add years to your life and life to your years. And it couldn't be easier. You don't need to join a health club, wear special equipment or go into training to reap the rewards.

The Conditioner. Walking conditions your heart and lungs and raises your body's ability to use oxygen more efficiently. In one study, women who walked briskly (3 or 4 miles per hour) at least three hours a week cut their risk of heart attack and stroke by more than half.

The Protector. Walking helps beat other health problems, too. It reduces your risk of some forms of cancer and osteoporosis. It fights the battle of the bulge, taking off fat and building muscle. Walking can even help people with diabetes reduce or eliminate the need for medication.

The Joint Saver. Walking can burn about as many calories per mile as jogging does. But it delivers only about a quarter of the jolt, so it's much easier on your joints and muscles.

The De-Stressor. Walking is easy on your mind, too, since it lessens stress and lightens depression. Beginning walkers usually report that they feel better, sleep better and that their mental outlook improves.

The Winner. Best of all, walking has the lowest dropout rate of any form of exercise. So you're more likely to stick with it and get all these benefits and more, like better digestion, improved regularity and lower blood pressure.

There's nothing to it

Just put on a sturdy, comfortable pair of shoes and go. Walk to the store for the Sunday paper...park a few blocks from work or get off the bus or train one stop early and walk from there...use stairs instead of elevators or escalators...on bad weather days, walk in a mall or on a gym treadmill.

How fast should you go? That's easy, too. Just use the "talk test." Move at a steady clip that makes your heart beat faster and causes you to breathe more deeply—but doesn't leave you too breathless to carry on a conversation.

You'll do yourself a world of good.



SCAM ALERT

by Alice Ordovery,
Independent Living Resource
Center, San Francisco

Be Aware: Phone scammers have been contacting people giving the impression that they work for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The scam caller says they need information right away for certain medical bills to be paid. The scammer tells the person they need to pay \$389 right away to continue their Medicare or Medicaid coverage.

Remember: Medicare does not ever gather information by the telephone. If you receive such a scam call, hang up. If you are concerned about your coverage benefits, call Medicare directly. 📞

LARGE PRINT If you would like a text only, large print version of *Living Independently*, please send your request to Lynn Yaney — 40 Douglas Dr., Martinez, CA 94553.

Bob bids us farewell

CONTINUED FROM COVER

unit. He says his transition “happened because of an opportunity at the time. The Area Agency on Aging needed an Information & Referral Coordinator for senior services in central Contra Costa County, so I decided to try it, and it proved to be a good fit.”

Over three decades later, I sat down with Bob to hear his thoughts on how far we’ve come in the area of Aging and Adult Services.

Public Authority agencies are now mandatory in counties in California, but Contra Costa began exploring the need for an independent agency to address the needs of providers and consumers of adult care services before legislation made it mandatory. Bob recalls that the Board of Supervisors asked then EHSD Director John Cullen to evaluate the pros and cons of such an agency. Bob recalls with a laugh, “I had no gray hair before that process began!” Bob’s bureau “did an in-depth analysis over a couple of years, and presented our findings to the Board.” He acknowledges that the bureau had a general idea of what would work, but gives credit for the creation of The Public Authority to the Board of Supervisors. He explains, “Up until we had PAs, there was limited input into the IHSS program. We didn’t take into account or get formal feedback from providers or consumers of our services. Now we’re open to public scrutiny. It makes our jobs a little harder sometimes, but it’s the right thing to do. We are more responsive to local circumstances and our population.”

Bob believes the PA Advisory Committee and the Senior Advisory Council have been very successful in providing input as to the needs of disabled and aging adults. Bob maintains, “We’ve always advocated for public input. We really do have strong advisory bodies and good partnerships with community advocates. We’ve made some inroads into transportation problems. In certain regions of the county, we’ve found grass roots solutions.”

Aging and disability advocates continue to push for more services for their populations, with an added urgency in the areas of health care integration, transportation and in-home care options. Bob agrees that those three issues have been a priority for at least two decades, and believes that two decades from now, those issues will still be up for discussion. He adds, “Equally critical is the need for housing options. People need to have enough affordable housing options available to them. No one wants to

be forced prematurely into giving up their independence.” He continues, “IHSS alone can’t meet the need for everyone. In the future, we will need to adapt IHSS, or adapt other programs to integrate with IHSS.”

The integration of services was a priority of Bob’s, with much work put into the creation of the Adult Long Term Care Integration (ALTCI) program in recent years. The project is on hold for now, stalled in the legislature. “Unfortunately,” Bob tells me, “We couldn’t get ALTCL.” It is one of Bob’s disappointments in his career. “We still think we have a plan that will work, but we didn’t get state approval. The state and feds didn’t go for it.” One silver lining to that cloud is the established partnerships with Health Services in this county. Bob qualifies that he is “partially happy” with the results. “We stretched the limited resources of both of our departments with collaborative efforts over the years. We have had lots of good results, and we’re still working on it.”

Another feather in Bob’s cap has been the integration of the Public Authority to work cooperatively with the IHSS program. He says, “I think we have one of the models for other counties in the state. The PA has a few key responsibilities: they run a registry of providers, they have an advisory committee, and they are the spokesperson for working with labor representatives on issues. What we’ve done with our PA is to adapt their responsibilities to meet their strengths. They have generated ideas and we’ve adopted innovations. What the PA does well, we have moved into their arena. For example, most interface with care providers has been moved from IHSS to the PA. The PA has also created the Rapid Response Program, which appears to be meeting a critical need. We’ve also hired additional staff to get the new Call Center going at the PA.” Bob believes that by using the strengths of each program, social workers will have more time to devote to the needs of IHSS consumers, while the PA staff will effectively respond to the needs of IHSS providers. He says, “There has been a balance in the structure. Each entity has evolved into their strengths.”

The challenges of caring for the aging population will only become bigger in the future. Bob believes IHSS and the overall idea of adult care is starting to get attention, but “in ten years, as the program grows,

Bob bids us farewell

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

politicians will start raising real questions.” He points out that we need to find a balance, “From a legislative point of view, they want to see quality care given, as well as tax dollars well spent. But there are difficulties in managing the role of the employer (consumer), and there need to be ways to build safeguards into the program.” One current issue is the possible need for criminal background checks on all potential caregivers on the public registry. Bob cautions, “It’s very complicated. I won’t be here to see it through to completion but it is being worked on, and I’m confident that work in that area will continue.”

Bob sees the future of IHSS and Public Authorities being driven by consumer demand. “As there are more and more people of advanced age, I hope at some point to see a closer integration of services. Younger seniors now are going to be even more insistent on different options for care.” Bob thinks we will see what he calls “higher levels of frailty and more dementia” as people live longer. He says though, “All our programs focus on keeping everyone living as independently as possible. With younger adults who have disabilities, their advocates are more concerned with the consumer’s decision-making and direction. The advocates for older persons are more focused on how we are going to care for someone. Younger people may have more ability to respond to issues. There will always be considerations around independence and control vs. protection and care. We always want to promote consumer direction, but protect them too.”

“The issues will only become more visible as the program gets bigger,” Bob concludes. His hope for the future is that there will emerge “more flexibility to tailor the delivery of services to meet the needs of the populations.” Progress has been made, but more is needed. Bob is optimistic, and looks forward to watching from the sidelines to see what his successor accomplishes. He acknowledges, “There are always going to be problems, but if you keep working on them, you’re bound to come up with something better than what existed before.” 🐦



what's the buzz about West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne disease that can infect humans, birds, horses and other mammals. In most humans, WNV infection can cause mild flu-like illness, or may cause no symptoms at all. However, in some cases, particularly among the elderly, it can cause severe neurological diseases such as encephalitis or meningitis. West Nile Virus first appeared in North America in New York City in 1999. Since then, the virus has spread across the continental United States.

West Nile Virus is spread to humans predominantly by the bite of an infected mosquito. Not all mosquitoes are infected; the proportion is very small. Symptoms may include: headache, high fever, stiff neck, confusion, coma, tremors, convulsions and muscle weakness or paralysis. Symptoms generally appear within 3–15 days of being bitten by an infected mosquito. If symptoms occur, you should see a doctor.

To protect yourself against West Nile Virus, follow the four D's.

DRAIN standing water around the house weekly since this is where mosquitoes lay eggs: Including tires, cans, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, animal water containers, toys and puddles.

DUSK & DAWN are when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active, so limit outdoor activities or take precaution to prevent mosquito bites.

DEET is an effective ingredient to look for in insect repellents. Always follow label instructions carefully. (Never use Deet on infants less than 2 months old.)

DRESS in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk hours or in areas where mosquitoes are active. 🐦

Phone Numbers

Adult Protective Services	(877) 839-4347
Public Authority Registry	(800) 333-1081
Call Center for Payroll	(800) 333-1081
Independent Living Resource	(925) 363-7293
Contra Costa Crisis Center	(800) 833-2900
Public Library	(800) 984-4636
Food Bank of Contra Costa/Solano	(800) 870-3663
United Healthcare Workers West	(800) 585-4250
For other resources in Contra Costa County	(800) 510-2020
PARA-TRANSIT SERVICES IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY	
County Connection Serves Central Contra Costa County	(925) 676-7500
East County TRI-Delta Transit Scheduling Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority [for an application call (925) 754-6622]	(925) 754-3060
Richmond Para-Transit Service for 65+ or people with disabilities. Richmond, unincorporated areas in North Richmond, El Sobrante, Rollingwood, East Richmond Heights, and Kensington.	(510) 307-8027
WestCAT Curb-to-curb van service for seniors and people with disabilities. Serves Crockett, Port Costa and Rodeo, Viewpointe, Pinole and Richmond	(510) 724-7433

IHSS Public Authority of Contra Costa County

1330 Arnold Drive, Suite 143
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*“If you change the way
you look at things, the
things you look at
change.”*

–Dr. Wayne Dyer

*Internationally renowned author
and speaker*