



May 20, 2011

To: Honorable Mark DeSaulnier, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: May Revise – In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) County
Administrative Funding Cuts—OPPOSE**

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) opposes Governor Brown's May Revision proposal to reduce funding for the administration of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. Counties face a \$5.2 million General Funds reduction under this proposal. We also oppose the proposed cut of \$2.2 million General Funds to county Public Authorities.

County IHSS programs provide intake and case management for over 430,000 low-income aged, blind and disabled persons served by this safety net program. The services allow recipients to live safely in their own homes and communities, and help reduce state costs for nursing homes, hospitalizations, and other institutional care settings. These cuts will undermine service quality and could potentially place aged, blind and disabled persons at greater risk of placement into an institutional care setting.

For the past two years county staff has struggled to keep pace with the many changes to the IHSS program, including implementing new provider enrollment requirements that include criminal background checks and screening, provider enrollment forms, and orientations. IHSS staff have helped recipients through the many changes in services, including a prior cut based on functional index scores which counties subsequently had to reverse due to lawsuit decree, and the most recent 3.6 percent across-the-board cut implemented February 1, 2011. Every change has created demands on county staff to assist recipients and providers to comply with the new policies and to ensure that IHSS clients continued to receive services.

IHSS program administration was seriously under-funded prior to this cut. The original budgeting yardstick for IHSS assumed that county workers needed only 11.58 hours per client per year to provide a number of services to administer the program, such as enrolling recipients into the program, conducting individualized in-home assessments, coordinating with other service providers for care, enrolling providers and processing provider timesheets. This budgeting yardstick was totally inadequate when it was established in 1993 and has remained relatively unchanged since then.

However, the state does not even budget enough to meet the yardstick. First, counties have not received any funding to cover increases in the cost of administering the IHSS program for the past nine years. In addition since 2008-09, counties have sustained a five percent cut to IHSS administration (\$15 million total funds, \$5.3 million General Funds), which is proposed to continue in 2011-12. This has reduced the number of hours that social workers spend per case to approximately 7 hours – less than two-thirds of the already unrealistic budgeting yardstick.

The additional proposed cut is simply untenable for county IHSS programs and will put aged, blind and disabled persons at risk of harm. Both county IHSS and Public Authorities have worked diligently to implement numerous new legislative mandates while grappling with cuts previously enacted to address prior year State Budget shortfalls. Further cuts will decimate services to this vulnerable population.

We respectfully urge you to reject these proposed cuts to county IHSS Administration and Public Authorities.

cc: Jennifer Troia, Consultant, Senate Budget Committee
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