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Advisory Committee on IHSS Meeting
6955 Foothill Blvd. Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94605
April 1st, 2021 at 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
[Zoom Meeting https://zoom.us/j/95244568658](https://zoom.us/j/95244568658)
Dial +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
Meeting ID: **952 4456 8658**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Sandra Johnson (*Chair*), Warren Cushman, and Pamela Jacob

Committee Members Absent: Shawn Costello

Public Authority Staff Present: Marcella Velasquez (*PA Executive Director*), Saundra Pearson, Hyun J. Kim, Mitzi Richardson, Emily Vo, and Christine Morgan

AAS/IHSS Staff Present: Faith M. Battles (*AAS Assistant Agency Director*), Nicole Hayes and Everett Robinson

AAS/IHSS Staff Excused/Absent: Sheila Reyes

Guest/Public Present: Hannah Karpilow

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Advisory Committee (AC) Chair Sandra Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm then followed by self-introductions.

II. Approval of Agenda and Meeting Minutes

A. Agenda Additions and/or Revisions – Motion to approve the agenda as presented.

(Motioned) Warren Cushman

(Seconded) Pamela Jacob

No additions. Motion approved.

B. Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the minutes of January 7, 2021 meeting as presented.

(Motioned) Warren Cushman

(Seconded) Pamela Jacob

Motion approved.

III. Adult & Aging Services (AAS) Updates

COVID-19 Updates

1. Alameda County is now on the Orange tier which means businesses are open to the public and percentage of people that are allowed in businesses has grown as well-50% of the maximum capacity. Public recreation businesses are now open including bowling, pool halls, gyms, etc. We appear to be making progress with not spreading COVID. Tier opening is based on rates of infection, positive tests, hospitalizations, and deaths - all have decreased in numbers.
2. In terms of what does that mean for Social Services Agency / Adult and Aging Services / In-Home Supportive Services - we are still doing business as usual but have not gone back on full operation of all staff being in the office at the same time or opening the lobby because that is a thoughtful process, we are going to start looking over time. There seems to be another

wave coming in or spike of COVID cases after the holidays have passed. We do have orientations but in much smaller attendance. We are working on virtual orientation so participants do not have to come into the office, and that will remain the same.

3. The biggest piece of news in California is the American Rescue Plan that was passed by the Biden Administration on both houses on March 11, 2021. About \$2 trillion dollars' worth of relief that will go to the impacted individuals, state, and counties. It's a federal fiscal recovery for state and local government - \$362 billion will go to state's territories, cities, counties, and tribal government to help cover expenses that are related to the pandemic, \$10 billion will go to state that includes remote options for COVID-19 as a public health emergency, \$20 billion connected to the vaccine throughout the country - to make the vaccine accessible and distributed more quickly and equitably and help boost public confidence about the vaccine.
4. There are also some money allocated for expansion of Public Health workforce, Behavioral Health/Mental Health, nursing home facilities, long term care facilities, testing and contact tracing, emergency rental assistance funding program, housing assistance, homeowners assistance fund, food, nutrition and assistance for elders, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program for school lunch/child care lunch, \$1.4 billion for aging Americans Act, funding for senior nutrition program, disease prevention, home and community based programs which is intended to keep elders in their homes and living independently in the community.
5. It is important to know for our discussion that AAS do not have control over the distribution of the vaccine, and that effort is solely controlled by Health Care Services Agency and Public Health. AAS can only help share the information to our clients and providers so they will know how they can have access to vaccine.
6. We are seeing more vaccinations specially with African American communities.
7. Oakland Coliseum is run by the state and there are about 1,000 people operating that vaccination Points of Dispensing (POD) by the California Office of Emergency and have resulted in a good number of vaccines. However, not everyone who gets vaccinated in that POD are residents of Alameda County.
8. The smaller Community Vaccination Points of Dispensing (POD) also known as Vaccination PODs is what capturing our zip codes data – Fremont High School in Oakland, Castro Valley Library, and Hayward Adult School are now allowing people to walk up and get vaccinated.

IV. Public Authority (PA) Updates presented by PA Staff

A. Registry Update

1. Mitzi Richardson provided statistical data on registry for the first quarter of year 2021. The current number of active providers as of March 31, 2021 was 897 providers. The number of phone calls received was 5,779 which is about 100 calls per day. The number of registry matches is 853 referrals generated, of those 853 we tracked 84 matches. We relied upon feedback from recipients and generated reports from them. As far as the Emergency Back-Up System (EBU), during the first quarter there were 6 referrals and 4 were matched for providers.
2. Breakdown of the 5,000+ calls received for the Registry from January to March 2021 (type of calls): 106 about IHSS orientation, 552 general info, 1001 health benefits, 137 IHSS intake / eligibility, 1403 referral list, 371 new provider applicants, 690 payroll, 74 training, 1409 providers' monthly check-in/update, and 7 were urgent needs request. Most callers were existing contacts/clients/providers already linked to IHSS services.
3. Question from Pam Jacob: "How do you handle social work intake interviews with this many people interested and how much in matching - specific are you with the information you give out with providers expertise?"

Answer from Mitzi: "As far as social work intake interviews, that question might better be addressed by Marcella because we don't really track how social worker interviews go, but

as far as provider interviews...when they get a list of referrals, the recipients interview the providers that come. That is what we're tracking in the Registry. In the database, we collect information about the recipient's needs, and we also collect information from providers side of what types of responsibilities they are interested in taking. We do track work preferences from providers."

B. Health Benefits

1. Report presented by Christine Morgan. Currently, there are 6,008 covered members; that is a recovery number from a slow reduction over the early parts of COVID-19 last year. Now, we have come a full circle year and we are seeing those numbers come back up.
2. We are also in the middle of our annual dental open enrollment period; we mailed out to 5,922 members, and so far, we have received 244 responses which is not uncommon. For many years everyone defaulted to the HMO Dental plan because it created a cheaper deductible for all the three coverages. We now have 2,674 members covered by HMO, and 3,334 members in our PPO plan through Delta Dental.
3. We have seen a rise on phone calls in our health and benefits line due to the dental plans. We used to average 300 calls a month prior to the open enrollment, but now we are averaging about 500 calls a month.
4. There's opportunity for everyone to have COBRA to purchase your same medical/dental/vision plan you had while you were working, if you should happen to lose your coverage due to job lost or reduction of paid hours. Right now, from April 1, 2021 thru September 30, 2021 there will be no charge. Apparently, it is being 100% covered through the employer with the reimbursement program through the state and the feds. This is a huge opportunity for people to keep their benefit.

C. Training

1. Online training platform is continuously gaining its popularity; in the last 3 quarters we have already exceeded our goal of the participation number for the fiscal year by 150%. 1,640 participated and among them 646 were recipients. We have also continued to develop training courses and in partnership with Public Health staff; we've launched workshops on hypertension and stroke as well as inflammation and dental health.
2. Comment by Warren Cushman: "I just want to lift up the discussion earlier around the registry and training...there are challenges in terms of the registry, but training is a key there. I would like to see at some point perhaps there'd be a conversation between the registry and training staff around how we can improve training so that recipient has a better chance of getting a provider through training."
 - a. Pamela Jacob agreed with Warren Cushman and wanted this to be a topic on the next meeting; ideas on how to get consumers up to speed on training.
3. Per Marcella Velasquez, we have a very robust training in Alameda County, however we cannot mandate training to providers.

V. Recruitment

Advisory Committee Members

1. There is a new applicant for the AC-IHSS by the name of Rafe Biggs who was recommended by Warren Cushman. Mr. Biggs will be interviewed by the committee members and will hopefully be accepted for the next Advisory meeting. Marcella Velasquez has done the background/reference check on the new applicant and is hoping to be voted as member of the committee so it can be on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting.
2. A full Advisory Committee consists of 11 members when fully filled, and we have 4 members

- which means we are down 7. If Mr. Biggs would be voted in by members, then there will be 5.
3. Sandra Johnson reiterated that posting ads of the Advisory Committee member recruitment on several Bay Area newspapers would be the way to go in recruiting new members; this should fill the rest of the vacant positions that we currently have in the Committee.
 4. Recruitment flyer was already sent to the Board of Supervisors aids, but we can share the most updated flyer again.
 5. Sandra Johnson recommended to have the recruitment flyer sent to the City of Oakland, City of Hayward, to the mayors or city council persons because they may know someone who might qualify to be a committee member.

VI. Other Discussion Items

A. IHSS State Audit

1. Audit was done by the State of California and audited the IHSS program in general focusing on 4 counties: Butte, Kern, San Diego, and Stanislaus. The IHSS Program serves over 500,000 recipients but the State typically picks 4 random counties from different regions to audit.
2. Overall recommendations from the Audit of the 4 Counties:
 - a. It was a challenge for recipients to recruit and to retain providers adequately to serve their needs. One main reason is due to provider wages that counties pay across the state, and it makes it challenging to recruit quality providers to do this level of work. It was recommended that provider wages across the state be increased.
 - b. Promptly processing applications according to the mandates to ensure recipients get their services timely.
 - c. One regulation said the counties have to submit a plan to the state on how they administer the program at the local level and deliver services. However, for the past 25 years there has been no county plan. None of the counties are required to submit a plan to the California Department of Social Services. Recommendation is to have a plan to enhance service delivery.
 - d. There are fundamental issues with the program, but what can be done is that making sure recipients receive services and have emergency back-up systems. There are some Public Authorities within the State that have emergency back-up systems, but not a lot because it is costly. California Association of Public Authorities (CAPA) will be doing a survey to all Public Authorities regarding registry and recruiting, providers to start building a framework of what that might look like and suggest to the state.

B. COVID-19 Vaccine Update for Providers / Recipients

1. Faith M. Battles had already addressed this topic.

C. CICA Membership Report and Additional Rep

1. Warren Cushman gave the California IHSS Consumer Alliance (CICA) Report.
2. Conversation around the 7% cut and there is a support to removing that cut.
3. There is also a discussion of the Brown Act. Governor's proposal during COVID about the Brown Act Meetings is being challenged (i.e. meetings like this are being looked at by the Court due to Brown Act).
4. Court is supposed to rule having to do with the Brown Act and that will be discussed.
5. What is specifically being challenged in the court?
 - a. The proposal/process put by the Governor to exempt meetings like the Advisory Committee (should be meeting in person) to meet by phone/virtually was challenged by the court, but there is no ruling yet. The concern was that all meetings must be done in person.

6. There has been new legislation introduced. The goal is to modernize the Brown Act to have options to holding meetings specially during emergencies such as COVID. Three bills have been proposed (i.e. Public conferencing via teleconference) but there were bills that were opposed by CAPA; closed captioning for all participants if they're calling in, and translation services during the meeting.
7. Warren Cushman made a motion to make Pamela Jacob to be the alternate rep for CICA. Pamela Jacob seconded. Motion carried.

D. SEIU Rep

1. Sandra Johnson got in contact and spoke with SEIU reps. She called again to remind them of the AC-IHSS meeting but did not get a response. Ms. Johnson will follow up and will move this agenda onto the next meeting.

VII. Action Items

A. Next Advisory Committee Meeting

1. Next meeting will be on Thursday, July 1st, 2021.

VIII. Public Input (Time Limit: 3 minutes per speaker)

Hannah Karpilow would like to encourage the committee to pursue in whatever capacity to look at the original intent of the Public Authority. "We really wanted to have a continuum of services, to allow participants who needed a contract made to be able to access services through an agency when they're unable to find a provider on their own. There are not enough social workers to be able to give recipients what they need. Back in the day, social workers were able to provide recipients what they need. This is a life and death situation and there a lot of people out there having to make hard life choices."

IX. Adjourn

Move to adjourn meeting.

(Motioned) Warren Cushman

(Seconded) Pamela Jacob

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.