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11/17/2008 08:27 AM

To Cynthia C Johnson/PV/EDC@TCP  
cc  
bcc

Subject Fw: Letter regarding decision to eliminate IHSS Public  
Authority Program Manager position

Suzanne Allen de Sanchez  
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— Forwarded by Suzanne Allen de Sanchez/PV/EDC on 11/17/2008 08:27 AM —



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cc

Subject Letter regarding decision to eliminate IHSS Public Authority  
Program Manager position

November 17, 2008

Dear El Dorado County Board of Supervisors:

I find it necessary to write you about the decision to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority Program Manager position because I will be unable to attend the November 18<sup>th</sup> public meeting and speak during the public comment period.

The IHSS Public Authority Program Manager position is vital to the IHSS Public Authority, IHSS program and County. There are several different factors and options that the County should review which could identify potential savings, increase funding for the IHSS program, and significant County impacts to consider, prior to making the determination to eliminate this position.

The legislation designed the Public Authority to be a separate entity from the County to shield itself from liability. If the IHSS Public Authority Program Manager position is eliminated, the functions would be absorbed by an existing manager who has oversight over other County

programs. This would increase encroachment appearances and expose the County to liability by having the Public Authority functions in-bedded further with the Department of Human Services. El Dorado County has been fortunate to not to have any Department Fair Housing or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (discrimination) claims, Public Employment Relations Board hearings, or civil suits which other counties have experienced. The more the County can stay within the separate statutory role, the more likely it will benefit from immunity protections.

One of the major responsibilities of the IHSS Public Authority Governing Board is the labor negotiations. The IHSS Public Authority Program Manager plays a critical role at the negotiation table to evaluate the proposals on behalf of the Board. Board of Supervisors need to trust and rely on staff to ensure their decisions are ethically and financially secure. The most qualified to person handle this is the current IHSS Public Authority Program Manager, who has been a part of negotiations since its first contact and has always served in the Board's best interest.

The Governor is proposing to reduce the current IHSS provider wage. If the Legislature implements this plan the Public Authority will have to field and educate the 780 IHSS recipient and 800 IHSS providers, coordinate with the state & payroll system, and notice the Union. The most qualified person to handle this situation is the current IHSS Public Authority Program Manager.

The Public Authority is responsible for enrolling and educating all IHSS providers about the program regulations and preventing fraud. The IHSS Public Authority Program Manager was given the additional responsibility of overseeing IHSS payroll, which includes identifying potential payroll errors and processing overpayments. Eliminating this position would impact existing staff and impair fraud education and recovery.

Historically the IHSS Public Authority budget has under spent its budget. In FY 07/08 the program was allocated \$510,020 but only utilized 73% of the budget. In the state approved FY 08/09 budget, there was a reduction of 10% to the IHSS Administration Allocation, however there were no cuts to the IHSS Public Authority funds, which has a separate claiming process.

Here are a few ways the County can look at savings or increase funding for the IHSS program:

1. The County has IHSS homemaker positions, which are county employees and claim federal and state funds when directly providing client services. Anything spent above the state approved homemaker wage is all county funds. Current wage approved by the state is \$14.01 (which would include benefits) for the homemaker position, however we should be claiming their salary which can be as high as \$16.71 plus benefits which would increase the federal and state claimable rate.

2. The IHSS Advisory Committee is allocated \$52,964, which is completely funded with state and federal dollars - no county share. Direct services to the support of IHSS Advisory Committee activities are claimable. Currently all the IHSS Public Authority staff provide administrative support for the IHSS Advisory Committee. Combined the Public Authority program could be charging an equivalent of a 0.20 full time employee. The IHSS Advisory

Committee averages \$9,000 per year in expenses and any remaining fund is sent back to the state.

3. Despite the Federal Medical waiver (IHSS Plus Waiver) in 2004 to incorporate the previous residual clients (50% state and 50% county funding), the County's share of cost for provider wages continues to increase. There was a 4% growth in the County's share of cost for wage expenditures from the prior year. Last year the County spent \$1.58 billion for the IHSS provider wages and projects a 7% increase for this year. By closely managing these cases, the County's share of cost can be reduced by 1-2% which can result in significant accumulative savings. The County's share of cost also drives the IHSS Public Authority claiming rate and County's share for the program.

This information is provided to you because my position is that of the IHSS Public Authority Program Manager. I believe with my leadership and oversight over the IHSS Public Authority functions, the IHSS recipients, providers and County have significantly benefited. By eliminating my position, the County would lose 79% of federal and state funds and only gain a 21% County savings. The best qualified individual to oversee program regulations and costs and divert potential liability issues is to keep the IHSS Public Authority Program Manager.

Thank you in advance for allowing me to provide input. I know that these are difficult times for our county, state and nation. I sincerely hope the Board of Supervisors and County staff will give my proposal for real solutions consideration prior to eliminating the position.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary (Mame) Polito  
IHSS Public Authority Program Manager

cc: Gayle Erbe-Hamlin, Chief Administrative Officer  
Doug Nowka, Director of Human Services  
Suzanne Allen De Sanchez, Clerk of Board