



IHSS Coalition

QUALITY CARE BEGINS AT HOME

March 2, 2016

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee #3
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: IHSS Budget: 7% Across-the-Board Cut

Dear Assembly Member Thurmond and Senator Mitchell;

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Coalition supports the Governor's budget proposal to restore IHSS service hours that were eliminated as a result of 7 percent across-the-board cut enacted in 2013 and respectfully urges a permanent repeal of this cut. The IHSS Coalition is composed of fifty organizations representing IHSS consumers, providers and advocates. Our goals are (1) to ensure sufficient funding for In-Home Supportive Services and its interrelated aspects (2) to develop potential improvements for the program, (3) to disseminate information on homecare issues through public events and our website, and (4) to preserve and enhance consumer-directed services.

IHSS keeps Californians with disabilities, including seniors, in their own homes and saves taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in doing so. The IHSS program provides personal care and domestic services to

approximately 490,000 individuals who are aged, blind or have disabilities, which allow these individuals to live safely at home rather than in unnecessary, not desired and more expensive out-of-home placement facilities. IHSS is a critical component of long-term care services in California.

By definition, IHSS consumers are very poor; the vast majority have monthly incomes less than \$1,000 and \$2,000 in personal assets. According to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), approximately 85% of all IHSS consumers receive SSI/SSP. The FY 15/16 maximum monthly SSI/SSP grant for elderly and disabled individuals is \$889 per month and the maximum grant for couples is \$1,496. The average IHSS consumer is projected to receive 102 hours of service a month in FY 16/17.

7% Across-The-Board Cut

In 2013 the legislature adopted the provisions of a settlement agreement to resolve two class-action lawsuits related to IHSS cuts that were previously enacted: *Oster v. Lightbourne* and *Dominguez v. Schwarzenegger*. The cuts that were subject to these lawsuits were enacted when the state was dealing with significant budget deficits and, if implemented, the reductions would have been devastating to IHSS consumers and providers.

The settlement agreement and related implementing legislation repealed those reductions and established an 8% across-the-board cut that took effect on July 1, 2013. Under current law, the 8% cut was replaced with a 7% across-the-board cut on July 1, 2014. The settlement agreement also included a provision to “trigger off” the ongoing 7% reduction—in whole or in part—if the state receives enhanced federal funding pursuant to an “assessment” (likely a fee or tax) on home care services, including IHSS.

The 7% across-the-board cut hurt IHSS consumers and providers when it was placed into effect. A consumer assessed as needing the average number of monthly hours lost 6 of those hours – time which was needed for laundry or bathing or grocery shopping. A consumer who is assessed as needing the maximum number of hours – 283 – lost 20 hours of help per month – more than two days of personal care or domestic services. The

need didn't go away – but the help did.

Consumers have suffered disproportionately in recent years, with the IHSS hours cut compounded by cuts to SSI/SSP and Medi-Cal services, which are not proposed for restoration in the proposed budget.

In 2015-16, the service hours were restored through the use of the General Fund on a one-time basis, with the intent that an alternative funding source would be used in future years. During the recent debate and subsequent action by the legislature on the Managed Care Organization tax, the administration conveyed their intent to restore the 7% cut with state General Funds.

Closing Comments:

This year, we need all of you to do what you know is right – and what you've done before: Stand up for the California consumers of IHSS, their families and the workers who provide their much-needed care. We call on you to permanently repeal the 7% across-the-board cuts.

Sincerely,

AARP-California

Access to Independence

ACLU of Southern California

Alzheimer's Association, California Council

Bet Tzedek Legal Services

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)

California Association of Public Authorities (CAPA)

California Church IMPACT

California Council of Churches

California Council of the Alzheimer's Association

California Council of the Blind

California Disability Community Action network (CDCAN)

California Foundation for Independent Living (CFILC)

California IHSS Consumer Alliance (CICA)

California Senior Legislature

Californians for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR)

Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF)

Congress of California Seniors (CCS)

Dayle McIntosh Center for the Disabled

Disability Rights California (DRC)

East Bay Community Law Center

Educate.Advocate

FREED Center for Independent Living

Friends Committee on Legislation

Gray Panthers

IN SPIRIT

Independent Living Resource Center Inc.

Independent Living Services of Northern California (ILSNC)

Justice in Aging (formerly the National Senior Citizens Law Center)

Marin IHSS Public Authority

Nevada-Sierra-Plumas Public Authority

Northern California ADAPT

Older Women's League

Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles

Resources for Independent Living

San Francisco IHSS Task Force

San Francisco Public Authority

SEIU Local 2015

Senior & Disability Action (SDA)

Service Employees International Union – State Council

Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC)

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center | California Office

The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy in California

The San Diego IHSS Coalition

Tri-County Independent Living Center, Inc.

UDW /AFSCME Local 3930

Westside Center For Independent Living (WCIL)

cc: Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Myesha Jackson, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Chris Woods, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal
Tyrone McGraw, Office of Assembly Member Tony Thurmond
Will Lightbourne, Department of Social Services
Robert Smith, Department of Social Services
Michael Wilkening, Health and Human Services Agency
Matt Paulin, Department of Finance
Jay Kapoor, Department of Finance
Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst's Office
Callie Freitag, Legislative Analyst's Office