

COUNTY OF LAKE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
MEMORANDUM

DATE: AUGUST 19, 2015
TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: CAROL J. HUCHINGSON, SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
RE: RESPONSE TO 2014/2015 LAKE COUNTY GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

Grand Jury Recommendations regarding In-Home Supportive Services:

R 1. Provide a more extensive background check that extends outside the State of California.

Agency Response:

Consistent with state-wide practice for various professions which place employees in positions of trust for some of California's most vulnerable citizenry, elderly, and dependent adults and children, IHSS providers are subject to livescan through the California Department of Justice (DOJ). Criteria for disqualifying providers based on criminal background is established per state regulation and is extremely limited. The majority of IHSS providers are selected by their recipients and the recipient can knowingly waive provider disqualification and hire them anyway. Staff is not aware of any other Public Authority going beyond DOJ livescan results and in light of these facts, opines that there is little justification to do so.

R 2. Provide random drug testing of providers to increase public confidence and protect vulnerable recipients.

Agency Response:

A number of years ago, the Lake County Board of Supervisors desired to implement drug testing for IHSS providers but was not successful in doing so. Staff is not aware of any legal authority to do this and in fact, at that time, the IHSS provider union would not agree to it.

R 3. Provide Additional Vehicles for IHSS social workers.

Agency Response:

During fiscal year 14/15, the Department of Social Services expanded its fleet greatly, including the addition of four vehicles to Adult Services, for use by the IHSS social

workers. One additional vehicle is to be added to the Adult Services fleet in fiscal year 15/16.

R 4. Increase wages to attract and retain more qualified providers and provide a livable wage.

Agency Response:

IHSS wages are subject to labor negotiations between the IHSS Public Authority Board of Directors and the IHSS provider union. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing provider wages runs through September 30, 2016.

R 5. Increase training for providers that perform higher ranking tasks in each category.

Agency Response:

A mandatory comprehensive, four-day hands-on training is being developed for care providers desiring to be listed on the care provider Registry. This training will also be available to those providers who do not want to be listed on the Registry. The training components will address all functional ranking tasks including those in the higher categories. It is anticipated that this training will be available in Fall 2015.

R 6. Establish a certificate program for advanced training for providers as part of a pay incentive program.

Agency Response:

In addition to the expanded, comprehensive training described in R 5 above, staff is working on plans to pay a stipend to each provider who successfully completes the expanded training. A certificate will also be awarded to the care provider upon completion of said training.

R 7. Purchase on-site input devices with the reporting software installed and train social workers in their use.

Agency Response:

Staff does not agree with this recommendation that tablets or other devices be used in the field to conduct IHSS assessments. We believe that part of good social work is establishing a personal connection with the client while visiting them and conducting an in-home assessment. We are concerned that such a connection would not happen as well, with this client population, if staff is focused on technology while in the home. For this reason, we continue to direct staff to engage personally with the client while in the home, take adequate notes and return to the office to make full use of technology to complete the assessment process.

Thank you for your consideration.