

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency



353 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335

DATE: August 4, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Social Services Agency Director *RM*

SUBJECT: **Off-Agenda Report relating to outreach to IHSS workers regarding maintaining health insurance benefits during shelter-in-place order**

At the May 12, 2020, Board of Supervisors (Board) Meeting, the Board requested the Social Services Agency (SSA) and the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority to provide an off-agenda report relating to outreach to IHSS providers, regarding health benefits during shelter-in-place.

Between the beginning of shelter-in-place in March and the end of July, 1,006 Independent Providers (IPs) have had their insurance terminated. However, due to the nature of the IHSS caregivers, there is high turnover every month for benefits: those added and those terminated. 12,331 IPs are currently enrolled in medical benefits. 145 IPs are protected or have had their benefits reinstated since the shelter in place, regardless of the paid-hours status. Twenty-eight of the 145 have enough paid hours that they would not be terminated even if that protection ended. The requirement for continued benefits coverage is 35 hours paid within any one of the prior three months.

In terms of outreach, in May, when the County decided to allow providers who lost their insurance due to COVID-19 to be reinstated, the Public Authority contacted all IPs who had their insurance terminated effective March. The notice and postcard language were as follows:

MEDICAL BENEFITS NOTICE

Did you lose benefits because of COVID-19 shelter in place orders?

If your medical benefits were terminated or are at risk of termination because you lost paid work hours from the IHSS program and that loss of hours was caused by the COVID-19 shelter in place orders then your benefits may be able to be restored.

What to do?

Call the Benefits line at 408-350-3290 and explain how the COVID-19 orders caused you to lose paid work hours and to lose your benefits. We will review and continue benefits for those affected. You must notify us within 30 days of this notice.

This same notice is included with every warning and termination letter that is sent out so the Public Authority can provide continuation of coverage versus having to reinstate an IP's benefits. The Public Authority accepts the provider's verbal confirmation that they meet the conditions described in the notice if they call to request protected status. Protected status for each IP will continue until the Public Authority is notified of the end date for this program.

The table below shows all the actions taken since mid-May.

			Special Action for COVID Protected or Restored	Notices about COVID protection mailed to IHSS Providers		
	Terminated	Joined		Postcard	Warn	Term
March	202	270				
April	161	276				
May	185	261	86	918		
June	227	122	59		515	231
July	231	198			401	273
August						
Total	1,006	1,127	145			

- c: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board