

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

**GERALD HUBER**  
Director  
grhuber@solanocounty.com  
(707) 784-8400



**SOLANO**  
**COUNTY**

275 Beck Avenue, MS 5-200  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
(707) 784-8400  
Fax (707) 421-3207

www.solanocounty.com

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The Honorable John B. Ellis  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Solano Superior Court  
600 Union Ave  
Fairfield CA 94533

**Regarding: County Response to FY2018-2019 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement and Program Integrity/Anti-Fraud Functions of In-Home Supportive Services**

Dear Judge Ellis,

The Department of Health & Social Services (H&SS) appreciates the review of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program, a critical program for a number of County residents that is complicated and complex. H&SS is committed to an IHSS program that enables clients to remain in their homes instead of being placed in convalescent or board-and-care facilities, many of which are more expensive options with less family or individualized client care.

H&SS is in receipt of the 2018-2019 Grand Jury Report entitled: "Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement and Program Integrity/Anti-Fraud Functions of In-Home Supportive Services" dated June 21, 2019. The following is submitted in response to the findings and recommendations of the report.

Please note, the report erroneously states the management and supervision of the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement and Program Integrity Unit/Anti-Fraud functions moved from ODAS to the Public Authority in December 2018. In December 2018 the supervision of 3 staff was moved from the Administrator of the ODAS programs to the position carrying the title Public Authority Administrator, who also serves as a .5FTE ODAS Supervisor.

For your consideration please find the final data for SOC Form 2245 for FY2018-19 below.

<b>Solano County</b>			
<b>IHSS Fraud Data Reporting SOC Form 2245</b>			
<b>Fraud Data</b>	<b>FY 2016-17</b>	<b>FY 2017-18</b>	<b>FY 2018-19</b>
Total Number of Fraud Complaints Received	173	184	233
Total Number of Cases Terminated/Reduced	68	125	61
Total Number of Hours Terminated/Reduced	5,773	10,894	8,193
Fraud Investigations Undertaken/Completed	20	0	0
Total Amount Identified for Collection through County Overpay Recovery	\$3,264	\$9,668	\$75,365
Other (Unannounced Home Visits)	6	7	23

- It should be noted that for each case terminated or reduced, the number of attendant hours varies by as much as ten- to twenty-fold, as a result there is no direct correlation between the number of cases terminated or reduced and the number or hours terminated or reduced

**First Finding and Recommendation**

**Finding 1** – During the Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the IHSS faced staff turnover and changes in positions and duties that impaired its quality of performance.

**Recommendation 1** – Cross-train the staff to assist management in preparing for planned vacations, illness and possible additional turnover. Periodic assessment of potential increase in caseload by management is an additional tool for planning purposes.

**Response to First Finding and Recommendation** – The Department of Health & Social Services agrees wholly or in part with the finding.

The recommendation will be implemented.

A cross training plan will be developed and implemented. In response to the potential increase in caseload and the overdue reassessments, H&SS currently has two extra help Social Worker II's positions approved and under recruitment.

### **Second Finding and Recommendation**

**Finding 2** – Based on the County's current caseload and the job's requirements, the IHSS's program integrity/anti-fraud unit requires an additional full-time social worker.

**Recommendation 2**– Hire an additional full-time social worker for the IHSS program integrity/anti-fraud unit.

**Response to Second Finding and Recommendation** – The Department of Health & Social Services disagrees wholly or in part with the finding.

The recommendation is not warranted or not reasonable.

We agree should caseloads continue to grow and we will need to evaluate the program's needs to optimize future staffing in consultation with the Human Resources Department and County Administration. The addition of staff, when filled, and the cross-training plan to cover vacancies and illnesses, etc. should help address the concern; however, we will reevaluate as part of the review once completed.

### **Third Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 3** – Unannounced IHSS home visits increased from zero in FY2015-16, to six in FY2016-17, seven in FY2017-18 to twenty-three in the first three quarters of FY2018-19, a positive change.

**Recommendation 3** – Continue to focus on State mandates, including unannounced home visits, as well as verification of the receipt and quality of services to the recipients, their well-being and any related concerns.

**Response to Third Finding and Recommendations** – The Department of Health & Social Services agrees with the finding.

The recommendation will be implemented.

IHSS is a mandated, entitlement program. The primary focus of the ODAS Bureau is provision of services to the IHSS consumer. The Department decision and implementation that changed supervision for the staff of the QA/QI/PIU unit from the ODAS Administrator to the Public Authority Administrator provided the opportunity for better oversight and improved implementation of State mandates.

#### **Fourth Finding and Recommendation**

**Finding 4** – The quality of IHSS services could be improved with QA targeted reviews and quality improvement efforts.

**Recommendation 4** – Complete targeted reviews (although optional by State requirements) and perform quality improvements efforts with corresponding outcome reports.

**Response to Fourth Finding and Recommendation** – The Department of Health & Social Services disagrees with the finding.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or not reasonable.

As indicated, while QA targeted reviews are optimal to the quality of IHSS services, they are optional according to the State. While we value QA and believe targeted reviews can be an important tool, the program will continue to focus on optimizing required reviews and service delivery.

#### **Fifth Finding and Recommendation**

**Finding 5** – Even though errors in desk reviews findings (missing, incorrect or incomplete State and County forms decreased in FY2017-18, the count remains high and should be addressed.

**Recommendation 5** – Strive for more accurate and complete reports.

**Response to Fifth Finding and Recommendation** – The Department of Health & Social Services agrees wholly or in part with the finding.


The recommendation will be implemented.

Since the last annual State QA/QI Plan FY2018-2019, the Department's IHSS program staff have embarked on an electronic process for QA desk reviews wherein the Social Worker, Social Worker Supervisor and QA Social Worker communicate more efficiently and effectively. Staff are piloting the new process now with 6 Social Workers. When the pilot is complete and

processes are confirmed, we will expand the electronic process for QA desk reviews Bureau wide.

In conclusion, the Department of H&SS appreciates the issues raised by the Grand Jury regarding the IHSS Program. The information provided we believe appropriately addresses and responds to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations. I would like to thank the Solano County Grand Jury for their time and their evaluation of the IHSS Program. I personally want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the ODAS Bureau staff for the work they do to better the lives of some of Solano County's most vulnerable residents.

Respectfully,



Gerald Huber  
Director, Health & Social Services

Cc: Bela T. Matyas, Deputy Director of H&SS/Public Health Officer  
Joyce Goodwin, Health Services Administrator, ODAS  
Birgitta Corsello, County Administrative Officer  
Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Grand Jury Office [cdclower@solanocounty.courts.ca.gov](mailto:cdclower@solanocounty.courts.ca.gov)