



A coalition of Californians
dedicated to preserving
in home care for seniors
and people with disabilities

A Dangerous Budget Cut to IHSS Program

According to Herb Meyer, a 76 Year-old Marin County IHSS consumer living with quadriplegia, the proposed **18% reduction in IHSS hours** for domestic services such as meal preparation, clean up, grocery shopping and laundry will have a life endangering effect upon his life. He states "there will be a dramatic and negative domino effect if these cuts are implemented":

- 1. The tasks of grocery shopping, meal prep and kitchen clean up are essential activities for adequate nutrition to sustain life.** In describing the functional limitations of his disability, Herb Meyer tells us, " I have paralysis of all four limbs and cannot survive without assistance in preparing my meals". What appears at first thought to be a minor and inconsequential cutback is under closer inspection a life threatening unintended consequence.
- 2. If caregivers (IHSS worker) are not paid for the hours they spend preparing meals** and the errands and activities surrounding that task then their monthly income will be reduced which is an **economic attack on the quality of life of providers.** Their families will suffer and they may be forced to seek other employment and/or find additional IHSS consumers to serve. While the Governor's budget claims not to cut wages and benefits there is a decrease in the monthly check amount which in reality is a pay cut to the worker. **In many situations the worker will continue to do the work activities with the hours unpaid so as not to endanger their consumer.** In other occupations that would be considered an actionable fair labor violation.

3. Health and Dental care benefit funding will be eliminated for workers falling below the minimum 85 hours per month requirement. The state has spent several years investing in workforce improvements for home care workers. IHSS workers in California have just recently begun to receive wages and benefits that are moving towards a more “livable” level. California workers cannot provide a reliable health care service to their consumers when their own health care is at risk.

4. The IHSS Program is a fiscally responsible program delivering critical services to an at risk population of California seniors and citizens with very significant disabilities. The average cost to keep an IHSS consumer living in their home is \$1500 per month. The Governor’s budget proposes to eliminate essential IHSS activities that would destabilize consumers to the point of necessitating institutionalized care at the tax payer cost of \$6000 per month.

5. The concept of fairness in balancing a deficit budget must be understood and implemented. A combination approach of raising revenues and targeted program cuts to non essential service programs should be used rather than a 10% across the board approach. This approach is consistent with the non partisan recommendation of Elizabeth Hill, director of the Legislative Analyst’s Office.

Between now and the May Revise members of the Quality Home Care Coalition and other IHSS stakeholders like Herb Meyer will be visiting with Legislators and their staff to put a real face on the proposed budget cuts to the IHSS Program. Please welcome them and allow them a few moments of your time to tell you more about the dangerous consequences of the Governor’s proposed IHSS program cuts.