

**IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TO THE KERN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS****MINUTES****Thursday, November 16, 2023 - 1:30 P.M.  
Via Zoom**

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 p.m. by Chair Davis. The flag salute was conducted, followed by a moment of silence.

**ROLL CALL:** (\*Chairman, \*\*Vice-Chair, \*\*\*Secretary [non-voting])

**Present:**

|                     |                                             |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Sonia Dhillon       | Private Industry Representative             |
| **Gail Lancaster    | Third District Consumer Representative      |
| NickoleRenee Mensch | Second District Consumer Representative     |
| Eric Nisbett        | County Administration Office Representative |
| ***Jeremy Oliver    | Aging and Adult Services                    |
| Judy Snyder         | Commission on Aging                         |

**Excused Absences:**

|              |                        |
|--------------|------------------------|
| *Kaye Davis  | At-Large Care Provider |
| DeAnna Lewis | At-Large Consumer      |

**QUORUM**

Jeremy Oliver confirmed a quorum was present.

**Aging and Adult Services Staff:**

Michele Gomez, Program Director for IHSS  
Laura Juarez, Office Services Coordinator

**INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC AND NEW MEMBERS:**

Anabel Hernandez, Kern County Commission on Aging

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR JULY 20, 2023** – The minutes were approved as prepared. **Motion/Second/Abstention/Opposed (M/S/A/O)**  
**Snyder/Mensch/None/None – Motion Carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF 2024 IHSS Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule** – The schedule was approved as prepared.  
**M/S/A/O – Mensch/Snyder/None/None – Motion carried.**

## **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:**

None.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS OR REPORTS:**

- **Appointment Report** – Jeremy Oliver
  - **Reappointments:**
    1. **Judy Snyder** – reappointed by Board of Supervisors as Commission on Aging representative. Her new term expires 06/30/2025.
    2. **Gail Lancaster** - reappointed by Board of Supervisors representing District 3. Her new term expires 06/30/2025.
    3. **Deanna Lewis** - reappointed by Board of Supervisors as At-Large Private Consumer. Her new term expires 06/30/2025.
  - **New appointments:**
    1. **Sonia Dhillon** - Appointed by Board of Supervisors as At-Large Private Industry Representative. Her term expires 06/30/2025.
  - **Expired appointments:** None.
  - **Appointments soon to expire:** None.
  - **Resignations:**
    1. Evelyn Lopez – No response to several requests for reappointment. Her term expired 07/21/2023, and a letter will not be sent for reappointment at this time.
  - **Vacancies:** There are 4 vacancies:
    1. Consumer in Supervisorial District 1, term expires 06/30/2024.
    2. Consumer in Supervisorial District 4, term expires 06/30/2024.
    3. Consumer in Supervisorial District 5, term expired 06/30/2023.
    4. At-Large Care Provider, Board of Supervisors, term expires 06/30/2025.
  - **New Applications:**
    1. Christine Paulsen – Does not qualify for vacant positions as a care provider or consumer.

## **AGING AND ADULT SERVICES STAFF REPORTS:**

### **IHSS Report – Michele Gomez:**

Michele reported there were 912 new IHSS applications in August, 872 new applications in September, and 831 new applications in October. The caseload count for October 2023 was 12,915. As of November 1, 2023, Social Workers caseloads range from 256-298 cases. The Compliance rates (productivity standards per state) are 79% in Applications (State requires 80%), 91% in Reassessments (State requires 80%), and 95.8% in Community First Choice Option (CFCO) Reassessments (State requires 90%). Commissioner Snyder asked how many substitute care providers we have. Michele answered that the program is self-directed so if there's ever an issue where a provider doesn't show up, the recipient will talk with our Public Authority, who trains and provides orientation for providers and maintains a provider list. If a client doesn't have a family member to help, they can call or email to get another provider. If they request a backup, we do have a backup list. Some clients go through providers until they find a good fit and so some exhaust the list. Commissioner Lancaster shared that a lot of the elderly think that providers are stealing from them. Is there something that can be done to work this out? Michele answered that an Adult Protective Services (APS) referral can be made if they believe this is happening. If a client isn't happy with their provider, they can fire their provider and request another list of providers from Public Authority. Sometimes providers call in to make complaints against clients because they might be a little too aggressive. Anable asked what the timeline is for applying for IHSS services to when they are approved. Michele responded that it could take 3-4 months right now because Medi-Cal is extremely backed up because we have several cases that don't have Medi-Cal. If the client has Medi-Cal but just doesn't have the medical verification form, we can inact the case temporarily for 90 days. There are about 65 cases on average that don't get opened either because we lose contact with them, they don't follow through with submitted requested information, or they're not eligible.

### **Director's Report – Jeremy Oliver:**

#### **FEDERAL**

The House passed a stop-gap spending bill that will keep funding in place until January 19<sup>th</sup> for portions of the government such as veterans affairs, transportation, housing and energy department and the rest of the government would be funded until February 2, 2024. The Bill must pass the senate and obtain the signature of the president, but there are no current anticipated delays based on the status.

#### **STATE**

The Governor signed many legislative bills, AB 1228 sets the minimum wage for fast food workers to \$20 /hour starting April 1, 2024, additionally, SB 525 will see health care workers' wages gradually rise to \$25 /hour. Neither directly impact the wages for IHSS providers but can lead to future impacts. There are still discussions regarding whether the State will seek to assume collective

bargaining for IHSS. Currently the bargaining of wages rests with the individual counties.

Medi-Cal asset limits will be removed from Medi-Cal eligibility so all cases will no longer be means tested but will look at income to establish eligibility.

## **DEPARTMENT**

It is the open enrollment period for Medicare recipients, and they can make changes to their Medicare plans until December 7, 2023. Our Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) is assisting people with understanding their options at no costs to the clients. Those who have both Medi-Cal and Medicare can make additional changes within the year.

We continue to promote our Digital Divide program and want to encourage referrals to our department to assist seniors with understanding and navigating their digital devices. The program can meet with individuals in their homes and can assist them with obtaining digital devices to improve their access to services.

The IHSS program continues to seek additional staff to keep up with the rising caseloads and referral growth. As a reminder, the department will be closed for the upcoming holidays, and this includes the Winter Recess which all county departments will be closed starting December 22, 2023, and reopening on January 2, 2024. Some programs continue to operate 24/7 such as the Adult Protective Services and Conservatorship programs.

The department has had some recent break-ins which resulted in a vehicle being stolen on one occasion and a second break-in that only resulted in property damage, thankfully no one was injured, and the thieves were apprehended during both incidents. Additionally, we have had vandalism attacks on our building and county vehicles and this person was also taken into custody. These events have added to delays in responding to appointments as vehicles have had to be taken in for repair. Also, we are happy to report that a new secured parking lot is nearly complete so we hopefully will greatly reduce any further damage to our vehicles.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Ethics Training** – County Counsel is holding a virtual Ethics Training via Microsoft Teams on December 1, 2023, at 10 a.m. If you are due to take ethics training, please be sure to RSVP via email at [erica.hill@kerncounty.com](mailto:erica.hill@kerncounty.com), and once completed, provide a copy of your certificate to Laura Juarez. The online course will not be available after December 31<sup>st</sup> so if you cannot attend the training offered by County Counsel on December 1<sup>st</sup>, you can take the ethics training online until December 31<sup>st</sup>. If you need assistance, you are welcome to contact our Digital Divide program at 661-868-1052, or you can come into the office to take your training. County Counsel is looking into possibly creating an online course for Ethics Training.

2. **Bylaws** – We are in the process of setting up a sub-committee to review and revise the current IHSS Advisory Bylaws to include issues of non-consumer members, attendance, quorum issues, ethics training, etc. Commissioner Lancaster volunteered to serve on this committee. If others would like to join, please let Jeremy or Laura know.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None.

**OPERATIONAL ISSUES:**

Commissioner Dhillon shared that Kern Health Systems has a Personal Care and Homemaker Services program. While clients are waiting for to be approved for IHSS services, they can provide those services in the interim. She is unsure how this program will know when IHSS services have started. All will need a way to know when the client starts receiving IHSS services so that the providers are not being double paid, or their IHSS hours aren't reduced thinking the client already has a permanent care provider. They also want to make sure the right people are getting the care right away. Jeremy added that the State and the systems themselves are still working on the language about how they can relay information, whether it be through establishing MOUs with each of the individual managed care plans with IHSS services. We are waiting for the State to give us the guidelines of what can and cannot be shared. Commissioner Dhillon shared that they also have Respite Care for family members who need a break from taking care of their loved ones. They have a lot of services available for the community. They are onboarding every day and currently have 50 care providers. Anabel Hernandez asked if they would be able to get an MOU with IHSS to where their trained providers could easily become a provider for IHSS. Jeremy answered that we wouldn't be able to due to requirements to run our own background check because there could be different things we look for or don't that they do/don't. Michele Gomez shared that our Department collaborated with Kern Family, and they provided training to our Social Workers and Call Center staff and extended the invitation to all in the building to learn about their services. She also created a referral form that lists all their services for us to use, and IHSS created a form and gave it to Kern Family. This is still a work in progress.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at Aging and Adult Services in the Golden Generation Conference Room, 5357 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93309.

**The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver, Secretary

JO/lj