

**IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE KERN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS****MINUTES****Thursday, March 21, 2024 - 1:30 P.M.****Kern County Aging and Adult Services Department
5357 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93309**

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 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:

*Kaye Davis	At-Large Care Provider
Sonia Dhillon	Private Industry Representative
Anabel Hernandez	Commissioner on Aging Representative
**Gail Lancaster	Third District Consumer Representative
Eric Nisbett	County Administration Office Representative
***Jeremy Oliver	Aging and Adult Services

Excused Absences:

DeAnna Lewis	At-Large Consumer
Nickole Renee Mensch	Second District Consumer Representative

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:

Elizabeth McKinley, District Attorneys Investigative Aide
John Rozo, United Domestic Workers Representative

ACTION ITEMS:

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 16, 2023** – The minutes were approved as presented.
Motioned: Lancaster; **Second:** Nisbett; **Abstained:** Davis, Hernandez;
Opposed: None. **Motion carried.**
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR JANUARY 18, 2024** – The minutes were approved as presented.
Motioned: Lancaster; **Second:** Nisbett; **Abstained:** Davis, Hernandez;
Opposed: None. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:

None.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS OR REPORTS:

- **Appointment Report – Jeremy Oliver**
 - **Reappointments:** None.
 - **New appointments:**
 1. Anabel Hernandez, appointed by the Board of Supervisors to represent the Kern County Commission on Aging.
 - **Expired appointments:** None.
 - **Appointments soon to expire:** None.
 - **Resignations:** None.
 - **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. Ana Alonso – application was sent to the Board of Supervisors who have vacancies in their district for their consideration of appointment.
 2. Nora Marquez – application to serve on the IHSS Advisory Committee was in error. She meant to apply to be a caregiver for IHSS services. Application disregarded and notified Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of same.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES STAFF REPORTS:

Director's Report –Jeremy Oliver:

FEDERAL

President Biden released his budget outlining the Administration's policy priorities for fiscal year 2025. The President's Budget would increase the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) funding by 9% from the 2023 level to improve SSA customer service and make benefits more accessible to those in need.

The President's Budget recognizes the rising rate of homelessness among older adults and proposes to create a \$3 billion grant program to help communities provide targeted support for older adults in unstable housing situations and for those currently experiencing homelessness. The funding can be used for short- or longer-term cash assistance to cover rental arrears or other housing costs to prevent eviction, emergency home modification or emergency relocations, and to help older adults cover unexpected financial burdens such as a health emergency.

Additionally, the budget proposes to align Medicare Savings Programs and Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) eligibility methodologies; allow retroactive coverage of Part B premiums for Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) applicants, as is currently available for other Medicare Savings Programs; and authorize Tribal Health Programs to pay Medicare Part B premiums directly on behalf of their members.

Renews the Biden Administration's call for Congress to invest \$150 billion to improve and expand Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) and support the people who provide care. The Budget includes additional investments in the direct care workforce, family caregivers, and other home-based supports to help older adults and people with disabilities live at home and stay connected to their communities.

STATE

We are closely monitoring a couple of legislative bills that have direct impacts on the IHSS Program. Assembly Bill 2704 authored by Member Zbur, who is responsible for paying for the criminal background checks or providers to the county. Assembly Bill 2819 by Assemblymember Bains, looks at revising the penalty for counties that have not completed an MOU with local unions. Assembly Bill 3079 by member Ting, regarding allowing undocumented relatives to become providers. Senate Bill 1245 authored by Ochoa Bogh, is looking at the requirements of certification to perform paramedical services by providers. Senate Bill 1355 by author Wahab, is looking at changing the Medi-Cal redetermination periods from annually to every 3 years for IHSS recipients, this would be subject to federal approvals as well.

We await additional clarification on the State deficit as there still is some discrepancy on what the Governor and the Legislative Analyst office (LAO) believe is the actual state deficit. LAO currently estimates 72 billion shortfalls.

DEPARTMENT

We will be seeing our Fall Prevention program wrapping up as funding has concluded for the program. We will be watching to see if additional funding will become available.

The Adult Protective Services (APS) program continues to see growth in referrals and planning for this year's elder abuse conference will be on June 13th, at Double Tree with keynote speaker Merlyna Valentine, overall theme is Preventing and Recognizing Neglect. Conservatorship program is likely to see some impacts from the Care Court process being initiated in October of this year. SB 43 which is the expansion of the Grave Disability definition is being discussed to try to build needed infrastructure to make the bill viable regarding the substance abuse population.

The Department hopes to have additional space in the next couple of months, which is much needed due to the ongoing growth of cases and staff.

IHSS Report – Michele Gomez:

Michele reported the following report:

Kern Compliance Rates.

- Applications processed within 90 days averaged 77%, we are working on getting that up to 80%, which is the State requirement.
- Reassessments are averaged at 95%, within 90 days.

IHSS Statistics at Glance Handout

Program Data from January 2024 provided. The casework count was 13,428 approved or authorized cases, with 1,689 pending referrals. They continue to receive several referrals. They received 832 applications in the month of January 2024. There was an average of 156.88 hours per Severely Impaired (SI) cases, and an average of 91.64 hours per Non-Severely Impaired (NSI) cases.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Officer Elections** – Ethics Training online course will continue to be offered free of charge so if you did not attend the training offered by County Counsel on December 1st, you can take the ethics training online. You must be online for a minimum of 2 hours for your training to be valid. 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.
2. **Older Americans Month Resource Fair** – This event will be held May 18, 2024, from 9a.m. – 12noon, at Aging Adult Services in the front parking lot. All seniors are encouraged to come learn about the many resources available to them.
3. **Elder Abuse Prevention Conference** – This year's conference will be held at the DoubleTree hotel on June 13, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. Details to follow.

4. **Native American Spring Gathering** – The Bakersfield American Indian Health Project is hosting Native American Spring Gathering on Saturday, March 23rd at their office located at 501 40th Street, Bakersfield. The event is free and open to the community. The event included cultural activities, lunch, and prevention information on substance abuse, suicide, and domestic violence, as well as wellness services.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Bylaws** – We still need volunteers on the sub-committee to review and revise the current IHSS Advisory Committee Bylaws. Vice Chair Lancaster, and Chair Davis volunteered to serve on this committee. If others would like to join, please let Jeremy or Laura know.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES:

1. **Recruitment** – Laura shared that the committee could make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to appoint applicants. Vice Chair Lancaster shared that she talked with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, and they informed her that Aging and Adult Services would need to consult with their County Counsel re: changes made to the members serving on the IHSS Advisory Committee. She also shared that she has a meeting scheduled to talk with Supervisor Flores about this matter. Jeremy states there are requirements by the State so we can't change certain things. We can create some clarifying rules within our processes. He will review this further.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for May 16, 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 2:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver, Secretary

JO/lj