

FILED

JUN 21 2004

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF TRINITY**
BY: DONNA REGNANI, DEPUTY CLERK *DR*

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
2003-2004**

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT**

IN HOME SUPPORT

**This report was Approved
On May 10, 2004**

**2003-2004 Trinity County Grand Jury
Health and Human Services Committee
Final Report**

In-Home Support Services

Purpose:

The Trinity County Grand Jury is required to periodically review the scope and function of county departments. The Health and Human Services Committee of the 2004-2004 Grand Jury undertook a review of the activities of In-Home Support Services (IHSS), an entitlement program using federal, state and County funds. IHSS provides both domestic and personal care to aged, blind and otherwise disabled citizens (young and old) in their homes.

Background:

IHSS has grown dramatically over the past few years as a viable alternative to more costly permanent care facilities, offering a client-based social model rather than a purely medical one. County entities (Health and Human Services, Cal-Works and IHSS Public Authority) share responsibility for oversight of the program. Cal-Works acts as a contract agent, dispensing County funding and providing training for caregivers and supervisors. The IHSS Advisory Committee's members include caregivers, Health and Human Services representatives, a County Supervisor, a Cal-Works program supervisor, union representative, training specialist and clients. The Trinity County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) personnel evaluates client need and qualifications. The client has control and can accept or reject the selection of a caregiver. HHS periodically reviews and adjusts caregivers hours based upon client need.

Method of Investigation:

Interviews were held with the Trinity County Director of Health and Human Services Department, an Adult Services Supervisor and the Department Public Guardian, wherein we were apprised of the integral role of the whole department in acquiring and providing input into a successful program. We interviewed the Cal-Works Employment Program Supervisor and attended an IHSS Advisory Committee meeting and a Caregiver Training Orientation. Our inquiries were welcomed by all and every effort was taken to provide us a grasp of the realities of IHSS. The budgetary documentation, mission statement, and organizational charts provided a wealth of information.

Finding 1:

In an environ of shrinking budgets, limited funding, unfunded mandates and increased scrutiny by state and federal agencies, IHSS offers both shelter to our needy and a bargain to badly battered County health system providers. The relatively small sum going to caregivers proves doubly beneficial as the economic “ripple effect” energizes households and communities within the County.

Recommendation 1:

Develop and maintain clear channels for feedback from IHSS clients and caregivers to assure quality care. Provide incentives to caregivers for increasing their proficiency of client care.

Finding 2:

The rural nature of the County and subsequent isolation raises the potential for abuse and fraud within client-caregiver relationships (cabin-fever).

Recommendation 2:

The County should endeavor to determine what monitoring demands this places upon HHS and assist them in obtaining resources to meet this need. This will reduce the need for increasing State oversight of County functions (and fixing what ain't broke). The County should support a volunteer program of “visiting friends” to provide additional social support and observation in the homes of clients.

Conclusion:

Through the remarkably professional efforts of a dedicated Health and Human Services organization, IHSS has provided our community maximum care (more bang for the buck). We will become increasingly reliant upon this model as more costly, less viable health systems evaporate and self-destruct. Increasing state oversight and subsequent demands upon County resources are a primary threat to the success of the program.

Unless our seated Supervisors are asleep at the switch, they will immediately address this matter by asking the Director of the Trinity County Health and Human Services Department how their body might best serve the organization, thus ensuring the health of a dynamic system.

IHSS must respect the privacy of clients and caregivers, but we attest to the fact that we have some remarkable successes within our County.

Our thanks go to:

Linda Wright, Director, Trinity County Health and Human Services Department, James Curran (retired), Adult Services Supervisor/Deputy Veterans Service Officer/Public Guardian, and Donna Pate, CalWorks Employment Program Supervisor, Trinity County Department of Health and Human Services for their professionalism, dedication and assistance in this matter.

Responses Required:

All of the recommendations listed above are directed to the Board of Supervisors or their designated staff. Under Penal Code 933, the following entities are required to respond to the listed findings within the time period indicated:

Entity	Finding	Recommendation	Respond In:
Director of Health and Human Services	1,2,	1,2	60 days
County Administrative Officer	1,2	1,2	60 days
Trinity County Board of Supervisors	1,2	1,2	90 days

