

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

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For the Agenda of:
June 15, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Human Assistance

Subject: Report Back On Disability Case Management (DCM) Staff Reductions

District: All

Contact: Toni Moore, Deputy Director, 875-1762

BACKGROUND

At the May 14th Budget Workshop, DHA presented information about proposed staff reductions to the DCM program. Public testimony was provided at the workshop by one of DHA's DCM social workers. In addition, DCM staff have provided additional correspondence to Board members protesting reductions to this program. At the June 11th Budget Hearing, Supervisor Nottoli requested a report back regarding the DCM reductions and related impacts.

DISCUSSION

Following the May 14, 2009 Budget Workshop, DHA provided Board members with a memo (dated May 26, 2009) detailing the impacts of reductions to the DCM program. Highlights of that memo include the following:

- DCM Staff provide assistance to disabled General Assistance (GA) clients in making applications for SSI. This is a critical service in that SSI provides clients with a permanent income in place of GA and access to Medi-Cal funded health care in place of CMISP. In addition, once SSI is granted, retro active reimbursement of GA payment is made to the County General Fund. In calendar year 2008, reimbursements totaled \$2.4 million dollars.
- In Fiscal Year 2008-09, the program was staffed with 2.0 FTE Supervisors and 14.6 Social Workers, including one Social Worker assigned to a community-based team that is implementing a new expedited application process for disabled homeless people. Proposed reductions for Fiscal Year 2009-10 include 1.0 Supervisor 2.0 vacant positions and 3.8 filled positions. The filled positions include one Special Skills Laotian Social Worker. The remaining DCM staffing will consist of 1.0 Supervisor and 7.8 Social Workers. One Social Worker will remain assigned to the community-based SSI homeless project.
- The reduction in DCM staff may impact the level of reimbursement, however, the specific amount is difficult to estimate. First, since staff costs are supported by a combination of County General Funds and Federal Social Services Block Grant funds a dollar for dollar comparison cannot be made. Secondly, while the DCM staff assist clients with the application and documentation process, some GA clients receive assistance from attorneys and other advocates in the community. Therefore, the portion of the \$2.4 million directly attributable to the work of DCM staff cannot be pin-pointed.

- DHA is in the process of making program changes aimed at reducing the time and increasing the number of successful SSI determinations. Key elements include: better triage to permit spending time only on those with most potential for qualifying for SSI; group processes for the more routine tasks, rather than with individual workers (orientations, non-compliance overview meetings, SSI reconsideration information meetings) – relieves other staff to spend more time on better triage and better applications; eliminate duplication of work already done or that will be repeated by the Social Security Administration; improved application to gather better information to increase likelihood of approval; and, require DCM clients to apply for SSI within 10 days or face sanctions - will reduce delays and aid for recalcitrant clients. It is anticipated that implementation of these strategies will not only counter balance reductions in GA reimbursements due to decreased staff capacity, but actually help achieve better outcomes in the future.

Similar to other program areas within DHA, changes must be made in the way we deliver services in order to serve an increased number of clients seeking services at a time when reductions are necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE WAGSTAFF, Director
Human Assistance

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APPROVED:
TERRY SCHUTTEN
County Executive

By: _____
JAMES W. HUNT, Acting Administrator
Countywide Services Agency