

CHAPTER 9

IHSS QUALITY CONTROL, ASSURANCE & IMPROVEMENT

OVERVIEW OF QUALITY CONTROL SECTION

General Information

As part of the State of California 2004/2005 budget, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) proposed an In-Home Supportive Services/Personal Care Services Program (IHSS/PCSP) Quality Assurance (QA) initiative. The proposal outlined several enhanced activities to be performed by CDSS, counties and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to improve the quality of IHSS/PCSP service needs assessments, enhance program integrity, and detect and prevent program fraud and abuse. As set forth in Welfare and Institutions Code (W&IC) Section 12305.71, each county is required to establish a dedicated, specialized IHSS/PCSP QA function or unit that performs specific activities. The QA initiative requires that QC/QA workers conduct a specified number of desk reviews and home visits yearly for each allotted staff position. The completed reviews aid in identifying trends, training needs, and potential fraud, as well as ensuring compliance with IHSS program regulations.

Mission and Goals

The mission of the County of San Diego In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Quality Control and Assurance (QCA) section is to assist and support IHSS staff in authorizing IHSS services in a uniform and accurate manner for the benefit of program recipients while monitoring program delivery.

The goals of the IHSS QCA section are to conduct case reviews, detect and prevent fraud, ensure compliance with program regulations, and participate in other quality assurance activities as specified by the State ensuring the integrity of the IHSS program.

The objective of the IHSS QCA section is to provide reliable data to IHSS Program Administration and Operations, as well as CDSS, in the form of IHSS statistical summaries obtained from reviews of IHSS cases and other sources of data collection.

Quality Control Overview

IHSS Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QCA) consists of three IHSS Social Worker III positions assigned to the Aging & Independence Services' Program Support Unit. QCA Social Workers complete reviews on randomly selected samples of IHSS cases. Evaluating and utilizing the results of case review activities enables administration and staff to gain program-wide uniformity and prevent recurring errors. In addition, QCA staff monitors service delivery as a means to detect fraud and identify potential overpayment/underpayment situations.

The objectives of the reviews are to locate dollar errors and other findings that require corrective action, identify major trends and staff training needs, and provide policy clarification. The process provides information for consistent case management, program uniformity, and assures compliance with State and county IHSS regulations.

A variety of review procedures are utilized to obtain these objectives. Desk and full field reviews confirm that the information in the case record accurately reflects the recipient's circumstances.

Targeted case reviews focus on singular topics to ensure compliance with current policy and/or procedures. Reviews are typically conducted on-site at each district office, alternating among the offices on a quarterly basis. Cases are chosen at random for one of five types of reviews—desk review, full field review, focused case review, telephone review or targeted case review.

As reviews are completed, they are submitted to the QCA Supervisor for approval prior to being sent to Program Operations for distribution to the district offices. Program Operations has 45 days to prepare and return a response, including the completion of any corrective action necessary. Reviews are returned to QCA staff, and if all parties are in agreement with the findings, the reviews are considered complete. Reviews requiring additional deliberation are researched by the QCA staff, and may be returned to Program Operations for further action. If an issue cannot be resolved, it will be elevated to the appropriate managerial chain of command for resolution.