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Contact: Frank Mecca, CWDA
916-443-1749 or 916-847-4578

**Frustration and Unanswered Questions Continue with
In-Home Care Changes, Elderly and Disabled Remain Vulnerable**
State unable to provide answers to critical questions during legislative hearing

SACRAMENTO – Counties are frustrated and troubled by the state’s continued inability to answer critical questions to changes to the In-Home Supportive Services program, leaving many elderly and disabled vulnerable or hospitalized.

County and client representatives testified Thursday during a legislative hearing about reports from across the state of people who cannot be set up with caregivers because the state has yet to finalize changes to the provider enrollment process – days after a November 1 implementation deadline set by the state.

Many of the elderly and disabled who depend upon the in-home care program to remain safely in their homes are being held in hospitals until a caregiver can be set up, which may take weeks. Others who want to stay in their homes are fearful their health conditions will worsen and they will end up in a long-term care facility or hospitalized if they do not find a caregiver soon.

“These issues are real. Our county welfare directors are calling every day about people who cannot receive the personal care assistance they are eligible for because the state still has not given counties the adequate and complete instructions needed to implement changes,” said Frank Mecca, executive director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California. “We’re talking about vulnerable individuals who are remaining hospitalized or living in unsafe conditions because of the state’s failure to answer the significant outstanding questions on implementing their changes.”

Among the many remaining questions and conflicting information:

- It is not clear what criminal background information allows or prohibits someone from becoming a provider.
- Enrollment forms and materials are still only available in English, despite statutory requirements that the information be available in other languages.
- The state has failed to recognize the time it will take for the Department of Justice to authorize counties to receive criminal background information.

Counties cannot move forward with the new enrollment process because the state has not answered these and other questions. But counties also are no longer allowed to use the prior enrollment process, leaving the elderly and disabled and caregivers in limbo.

“We’ve never been put in a position to create a trap door for our clients,” Mecca said. “The state took three months to draft incomplete instructions and send them out. But counties were given no time to implement, receiving directions as late as Saturday, October 31 – a day before the implementation deadline,” Mecca said.

As pointed out by Assembly Member Noreen Evans, when other deadlines for legislative changes have been in jeopardy, the state has worked with stakeholders to implement changes as soon as

possible while ensuring changes did not cause a disruption to services. County and client advocates are puzzled why the state is not handling changes to the in-home care program in the same way.

“We appreciate Assembly Member Evans’ efforts to alleviate this situation with Senate Bill 69, which would have given the state and counties more time to work through these many issues,” Mecca said. “We urge the state and Legislature to consider the great human and financial costs the delays to implementation are having across the state.”

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is a nonprofit association representing the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. The Association's mission is to promote a human services system that encourages self-sufficiency of families and communities, and protects vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect.

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