



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
ADMINISTRATION

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ 139

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

P.O. BOX 962, 1080 EMELINE AVENUE
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061

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January 21, 1999

AGENDA: February 2, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Report back on Santa Cruz County Health Options (SCCHO) Wheelchair Repair
and Associated Issues

Dear Board Members:

In recent months, staff of HSA and of SCCHO have discussed issues with your Board regarding wheelchair repairs and services to physically disabled SCCHO members. Your Board has also received testimony from SCCHO members regarding these issues, as well as from the County's Commission on Disabilities (COD). HSA was directed to report back on February 2nd and on March 2nd on these issues. This report is in response to these two report-back directives.

Following our last discussion with your Board on December 8, 1998, substantial progress has occurred in resolving these important matters. SCCHO staff has convened several meetings with representatives of the disabled community, as well as vendors and providers of services to this constituency. SCCHO has also changed both its policies and its procedures to streamline service delivery. It appears as though the issues are now resolved to the satisfaction of SCCHO, the disabled community and those providers who vendor services to this constituency. Attached is a document from the COD providing commentary on these matters.

Since our December 8, 1998 report, SCCHO staff has convened both in person and in phone conference meetings with Durable Medical Equipment (DME) vendors to discuss vendor issues that have affected SCCHO member's access to wheelchair repair and authorization services. Through this collaborative process, SCCHO has developed and implemented policy and procedural changes. These changes have been endorsed by SCCHO's Physician Advisory Group and SCCHO's Finance Committee, which is authorized to act on behalf of the entire SCCHO Board. These changes will be presented to the full SCCHO Board for endorsement at their February meeting. SCCHO staff will continue to work with DME vendors in an effort to further refine policies and procedures, with the goal of increasing the abilities of vendors to provide timely services and to increase member access to, and satisfaction with, wheelchair

services. Policy and procedure changes were made to respond both to current issues, as well as to be responsive to a broader client base when SCCHO expands into Monterey County.

Substantial progress has also been made toward the development of the Member Advocate Program (MAP). The purpose of this program is to provide a source of assistance and support to SCCHO members in Santa Cruz County. The MAP is intended to assist members in accessing health care and to coordinate social and advocacy services. The MAP is designed to be another resource for assistance, in addition to SCCHO's members services staff and medical social workers/disabilities liaison position. As your Board is aware, SCCHO has distributed a Request for Proposals to community agencies which may be interested in providing the MAP. Program implementation is expected to occur this Spring. Progress on implementation of MAP will be the subject of a reportback to your Board in coming months.

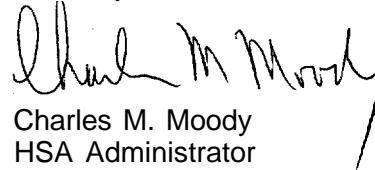
Additionally, SCCHO staff has been attending meetings of the Commission on Disabilities in an effort to continue the positive communication which has developed recently between the COD and SCCHO. SCCHO staff have reported to the COD on progress made on the above issues, and have responded to inquiries in a number of other areas of mutual interest.

In summary, the difficult and sometimes contentious issues that have been present in recent months between SCCHO and representatives of disabled persons appear to have been resolved. With the implementation in the coming months of the MAP program, and with the expected SCCHO Board endorsement of changed policies and procedures improving vendor reimbursement, and eliminating or minimizing requirements for TARS and RAFS, it seems that services to this important constituency will have reached a new and more positive level.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

Accept and file this report regarding SCCHO wheelchair repair and related items, and direct HSA to report back on May 4, 1999, with additional information regarding the implementation of the MAP program and other matters associated with SCCHO services to disabled persons.

Sincerely,



Charles M. Moody
HSA Administrator

RECOMMENDED:

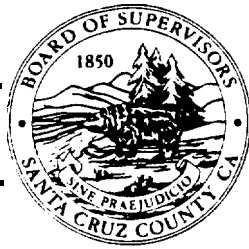


Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

attachment

CC: CAO
County Counsel
HSA Administration
SCCHO
Commission on Disabilities

**COMMISSION ON
DISABILITIES**



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

January 4, 1999

141
701 OCEAN STREET
ROOM 030
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

The Santa Cruz County Commission on Disability wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals who assisted the COD in its investigation of the delivery of health care services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries under Santa Cruz County Health Options. With your help, the COD informed SCCHO of some serious problems, and SCCHO responded with solutions.

The COD reported to the Board of Supervisors that the majority of SCCHO members were very satisfied with SCCHO services, and that the majority of SCCHO members who responded to our surveys and investigation were much happier with SCCHO than the State Medi-Cal system.

However, some SCCHO members were not satisfied with the health care services delivered by SCCHO. **The COD advised SCCHO and the Board of Supervisors that our investigation indicated that SCCHO members with disabilities were not receiving health care services as well as they had under the State Medi-Cal system.** The Board of Supervisors directed SCCHO, the COD and CAO staff to work towards solutions to all the issues raised. SCCHO, the COD investigative committee, and county personnel met to develop solutions to the issues raised by the report.

To encourage SCCHO members with disabilities to communicate directly with SCCHO staff on health care issues, SCCHO established a **Disabilities Liaison** position. The Disabilities Liaison is Ms. Susan Siep, who can assist SCCHO members with disabilities with any health care issues they have. Additionally, SCCHO proposed the creation of a **Member Advocate Position** to assist all SCCHO members with health care issues. This part time advocate would be an independent advocate, supervised by another agency in our county, while funded by SCCHO.

SCCHO staff immediately set up meetings with all venders of durable medical equipment to resolve any issues. After meeting with all the venders and discussing the issues that were slowing down repair and purchase of durable medical equipment, **SCCHO changed all its requirements for "RAF'S" and "TAR'S" making repairs and purchase of durable medical equipment quicker and easier.** The durable medical equipment venders and SCCHO staff continue to work together to assure the best coverage possible for SCCHO members.

Having worked for months with the staff and management of SCCHO the COD can say SCCHO is committed to providing the best health care services possible within the State and Federal guidelines it must follow.

Once COD and SCCHO met and discussed the issues, and SCCHO discovered that there were some areas that could be improved upon, SCCHO has responded to all requests for changes in a approachable and responsive manner.

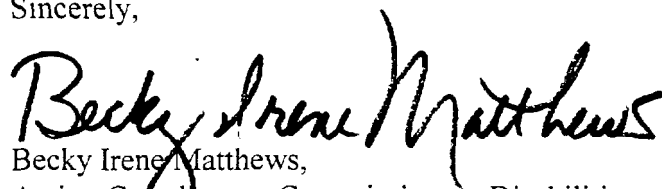
The COD urges you to share this information with you staff and your clients. SCCHO was created by the County Board of Supervisors to be more responsive to the community. Following the Board of Supervisors directives, SCCHO is dedicated to providing the best health care possible for all its members.

The COD has met **Susan Siep, the Disabilities Liaison at SCCHO, [457-3850 x 258]**. She is there to assist any member or any health care agency who needs to discuss a problem concerning health care services for a member. She can and will help SCCHO members with disabilities with their health care issues. We encourage you to call her.

This spring SCCHO will be busy creating the Member Advocate Position to be an out of house advocate to assist any SCCHO member with a problem that has not been resolved within SCCHO. The COD urges you to share your ideas concerning this advocate, and to share the fact SCCHO is creating this advocate and is funding this advocate to assist SCCHO members. The advocate will be effective if SCCHO members are aware of it and use it.

The COD is pleased have developed a good working relationship with the staff of SCCHO. We urge you to call SCCHO: call the member services representatives, [all bilingual] or, the Disabilities Liaison, Susan Siep, or Barbara Flynn, Senior Health Services Manager. Call them if you have a problem; need help with services for a SCCHO member; or if **you want to let them know how pleased you are with the health care services they are providing.**

Call the COD if we can be of assistance concerning any disability issue. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you. Together we are able to achieve change. (831) 454-2355.
Sincerely,


Becky Irene Matthews,
Acting Coordinator, Commission on Disabilities

cc: Board of Supervisors
Alan McKay, SCCHO
Susan Mauriello, CAO
Charles Moody, HSA

*all individuals and organizations contacted

formsccho.cod