

# Caregiver's Quarterly

Bay Respite Care

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## Rash of Overusage Bills at BRC!!!

We know we sound like a broken record, but it is vital that you keep track of your respite hours! Many families have not been doing this, as evidenced by the increase in overusage bills.

As a reminder, parents/primary caregivers are responsible for keeping track of hours used. BRC is not responsible, your RCP(s) is not responsible, nor is your Regional Center responsible for keeping track of your hours.

When starting our services, you signed an agreement in which you take responsibility for paying overusage bills in a timely manner— or else we will have to stop services. If you cannot afford to pay your bill all at once, we are happy to make payment arrangements with you.

Here are some timesheet No-No's that some parents have committed which can lead to

overusage bills/problems:

1. Have someone else sign the timesheet. Only people with an "Authorized Signature" on file at BRC can sign timesheets.
2. Sign your name once across multiple lines. You are supposed to sign each and every booking line.
3. OK your RCP to sign the timesheet. They cannot authorize their own timesheets.
4. Not signing the timesheet after every booking. If need be, ask your RCP for the timesheet to sign.
5. Signing timesheets in advance.

All of these timesheet No-No's keep you from verifying the final information that gets submitted to us for payment. If you have any questions, please call a Program Coordinator.

### Have you stopped using your Private Worker?

If you asked us to hire someone to watch your child (like a neighbor or grandma), then they are what's called a Private Worker.

If your Private Worker no longer works for you, please call a Program Coordinator and let us know! We will deactivate their file and therefore not ask them to turn in timesheets, complete in-service trainings, or submit proof of current CPR & FA.

*Let's all give a warm welcome to Courtney Mitchell, our Administrative Assistant! Courtney joined us a few months ago and has done a superb job handling her myriad of duties. I'm sure you'll appreciate what an asset she is to BRC as you get to know her!*

## Do You Give Your RCP Feedback?

We love to hear how our RCP's have helped their clients. Sometimes they create adaptive games or they re-structure chores/routines so their clients can take a more active part and feel more independent.

If you have an industrious RCP who is actively trying to involve your child/help them with daily living activities, please make sure you let them know you are aware of their efforts. A simple word

of thanks or encouragement is all that is needed to brighten their day and make them feel worthy.

If your RCP is doing something that you do not like, then also please let them know and inform us at the office as well.

And while we're talking about feedback— the BRC office staff would like to thank all of you for being such an inspiration to us!

### Bay Respite Care

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We're open M-F, 8:30a-5:00p

# Special Needs Alliance

While searching for new resources for our client families, I came across the **Special Needs Alliance**, at [www.SpecialNeedsAlliance.com](http://www.SpecialNeedsAlliance.com).

The Special Needs Alliance (SNA) is a national, not for profit organization of attorneys dedicated to the practice of disability and public benefits law. Individuals with disabilities, their families and their advisors can use the SNA to connect them with nearby attorneys who focus their practices in the disability law arena.

Because of selective membership, SNA member lawyers will have an

average of 18 years of relevant legal experience, with no member having practiced law for less than 10 years. They also have direct family experience with disability, and an active participation with national, state and local disability advocacy organizations.

Areas of expertise include:

- Special Needs Trusts and Wills
- Medicaid, SSI and Entitlement Program Eligibility
- Estate, Trust and Tax Planning for Individuals with Disabilities and their Families

- Financial Planning and Legal Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities
- Guardianships and Conservatorships
- Trust and Estate Distributions and Fiduciary Accountings
- Estate and Trust Administration
- Health Care Decisions and Advance Directives

The SNA website also has a great Resources page and an articles page written by SNA attorneys.

## A Call to Action- Save your Services!!

*(From: Arc-California with permission from the California Respite Association)*

Our community is facing its most serious threat in many years. Governor Brown's proposed budget cuts would gut the Lanterman Act's promise that people with developmental disabilities will get the services and supports they need to live full lives in the community.

**If the cuts happen, you could lose all of your services.** The ARC and other disability organizations are fighting in the Capitol to protect our community's services. To limit the damage, we need a strong show of support from the community. That means you and the people you know throughout the state. Here's what we're asking you to do:

**Come to Sacramento on Thursday, February 3 and Thursday, February 10-** the dates of the Legislature's only public hearings on the developmental services budget. We need to fill the hearing rooms with people who are ready to tell the legislators what the real effect of the earlier cuts has been and what the likely categorical reductions and service eliminations would mean to them and the ones they love.

The threat is caused by the state's massive budget shortfall, probably the worst since the Great Depression. To balance the budget, Governor Brown has proposed more than \$12 billion in cuts and about the same amount in revenue increases by continuing some existing taxes by five years.

**In developmental services, that would mean cuts to services of more than three quarters of a billion dollars --** real, new cuts, over and above continuing the much smaller 2009 and 2010 cuts. The total cut this year would include the federal matching funds we would lose as a result of the state fund cuts.

It's hard to grasp how much a cut that large would reduce the

Lanterman Act services, especially because the governor hasn't said exactly where the ax would fall. The state could eliminate all the regional centers' operating budgets and still not cut that much.

We do know that most of the cuts probably would come from imposing what are called statewide "service standards."

"Service standards" sounds good, doesn't it? But what it means is simply eliminating the IPP team's ability to pick the services and supports that the person with the disability needs, the key promise of the Lanterman Act. The 2009 caps on respite care and Early Start are the most recent examples of "service standards."

Let the policymakers know how the services and supports benefit you! **Real life consequences to real life people throughout the state are the kinds of things you should communicate to the legislative committees in Sacramento and to your local state senator and assemblymember. Tell them the cut is just too big to bear.**

Here is the best information we have as of today on the committees' public hearings:

- Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, 9:30 a.m. or later, February 3, Room 4202, State Capitol, Sacramento.
- Senate Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, 9:30 a.m. or later, February 10, Room 4203, State Capitol, Sacramento.

And if you cannot come to Sacramento, then call your local state senator and assemblymember this week and give them the same message!

Thank you for your advocacy.

