

From: EngAGE@CDA EngAGE@aging.ca.gov
Subject: FW: California Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program Master Plan on Aging Public Comment from Connie Arnold
Date: January 10, 2020 at 1:16 PM
To: Carrie Graham clgraham@berkeley.edu, Wong, Jennifer@CDA jennifer.wong@aging.ca.gov



A recommendation from Connie Arnold.

From: Connie Arnold <ihss_advocate@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2020 1:08 PM
To: EngAGE@CDA <EngAGE@aging.ca.gov>
Cc: Connie A <ihss_advocate@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: California Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program Master Plan on Aging Public Comment from Connie Arnold

Dear Master Plan on Aging Staff:

Please accept the following as a recommendation for needed changes to the California Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program to support greater opportunities for employment without fear of loss of disability benefits for interested seniors and persons with disabilities.

Working Disabled Program Retroactive Eligibility for Working Disabled and Eliminate Share-of-Cost (SOC) Above Income Threshold OR Preferably Raise the Income Earnings Threshold

If a person with a disability was unaware of the Medi-Cal Working Disabled program when they started working who otherwise was eligible for disability benefits, particularly LTSS like IHSS and/or a Medi-Cal Waiver, they should be grandfathered in for eligibility under the program despite working. Outreach about the Medi-Cal Working Disabled program needs to be made ongoing for county, state, and/or federal workers, disability and senior program representatives to insure that seniors and persons with disabilities are enrolled into the program under a grandfather provision. See

links: https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/TPLRD_WD_cont.aspx and https://ca.dhcs.org/ca/programs/health_coverage/medi_cal/program2.htm and <https://lanterman.org/uploads/e-info-packets/english/Adult%2015+/14-TheMedi-CalWorkingDisabledProgram.pdf> and <https://cahealthadvocates.org/californias-working-disabled-program-got-even-better-summary-of-changes-in-effect-since-8111/>

Knowledge of this important program is very limited with little ongoing outreach that encourages employment opportunities without losing critical disability benefits. Administrators (county and state staff) don't even know the earning threshold amount allowed for earnings. Participants are subjected to low income earnings cap, limited to owning one house and one vehicle. The earnings threshold must be increased or made unrestricted to allow those working individuals with severe disabilities the ability to work without being subjected to a high share-of-cost for exceeding the earnings income threshold. Such arbitrary earnings income caps cause people with disabilities to consider having to turn down raises, avoid career advancement opportunities, hold community fundraisers, having to choose losing their homes to pay for their attendant care and long-term care services to function when earnings income exceeds the allowable arbitrarily set program income cap. It is unfair that the person with a disability is potentially subjected to being forced off the program due to a work injury and inability to go back to a job in six months

forced on the program due to a work injury and inability to go back to a job in six months, having to contemplate or commit suicide, and consider quitting their employment to remain eligible for Medi-Cal based long-term care services (LTSS) after being subjected to the share-of-cost issue (or termination for failure to pay it) that inhibits their employment participation. The state restricts earnings by those with severe disabilities who are eligible for the Medi-Cal Working Disabled program. Such restrictions cause working disabled persons to artificially restrict their earnings to remain eligible for long-term care services funded through Medicaid like IHSS and IHO Waivers.

With the expansion of Medi-Cal to undocumented immigrants, it is equally vital to expand, improve, and make the California Working Disabled Program more attractive to new enrollees, including seniors and the promotion of work which must consider arbitrary age cutoffs. Elimination of arbitrary age caps, raising the low income and earning thresholds, eliminating share-of-cost rules, eliminating estate recovery rules, eliminate unearned income in any income calculations, and eliminating the one vehicle rule for those who need an expensive modified vehicle like a van with a lift, ramp, or other specialized driving or high tech modifications would make a big difference in attracting people, including seniors, into the workforce, even after retirement, who want to work or return to work for those seniors and persons with disabilities who qualify for Medi-Cal or who previously qualified for Medi-Cal at one time.

Sincerely,

Connie Arnold

M.S., Health Services and Public Administration Policy

Disability Rights Advocate 30+ Years

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