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No Senior or Persons with Disabilities Left Behind

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No Senior or Persons with Disabilities Left Behind

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12/10/18

Author's Note

Elizabeth Lopez, Department of Collaborative Health and Human Service, California State University Monterey Bay. This capstone project was created with the support of Aging and Adult Services of Monterey County to help raise awareness about the In-Home Supportive Services through a county brochure in English and Spanish and a presentation. Correspondence concerning addressing this article should be sent to Elizabeth Lopez, California State University, Monterey Bay, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA.
Title: No Senior or Disabled Person Left Behind

Abstract: The Monterey County Department of Social Services has been serving the community through the various programs to the community. The Aging and Adult Services unit of the department offers In-Home Supportive Services program which serves the senior population and people living with disabilities. This program unfortunately is not very known in the community and can serve a lot more people than it currently is. The problem being addressed is the lack of awareness that the program has among the community. The project implemented to remedy this lack of awareness is the creation of a county brochure that explains the program, who is eligible, and the application process for this program. Also, a presentation to the Health’s Project Canter explaining the program was part of the project. The purpose is to raise awareness of this program in the community so that more seniors and people with disabilities can take advantage of this program and bridges the gap between seniors and social services not being utilized due to the lack of awareness. The brochures were distributed among twenty partnering agencies with hopes to increase the number of calls made to apply or inquire more information about the program.

Keywords: Seniors, Disabilities, Caregivers, Awareness, IHSS.
Agency Description

The Monterey County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) is a governmental department under which it offers different services through various programs such as Community Benefits, One Stop Career Centers, Family & Children’s services and Aging and Adult Services. The project was implemented by the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program under the Aging and Adult Services division. IHSS was designed to help the elderly and people with disabilities to stay safely in their home with the help of a caregiver paid by the state. Additionally, to qualify for this program the recipients must be eligible for Medical and have some type of medical condition that prevents them from doing everyday tasks and personal care. Social Workers go to their homes to assess their needs and decide the level of care that the recipient needs.

The Aging and Adult Services’ mission is to “provide health and social work services to seniors and people with disabilities. Our mission is to empower and serve the aging population and persons living with disabilities to live safely in their homes and with dignity. The goal of Aging and Adult Services is to delay or prevent inappropriate institutionalization of seniors and people with disabilities. This goal is achieved through the delivery and coordination of home and community based services” (MCDSS, 2008. Para. 1). The Aging and Adult Services serves mostly older adults and people with disabilities through their various programs such as the Senior Information, Referral & Assistance (I.R&A), 24 Hour Adult Protective Services (APS), In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), Public Authority for IHSS, Supplemental Security Income Advocacy Program, Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and Military and Veterans Affairs Office.
Problem Definition

There are too many low-income seniors and persons with disabilities not receiving social services in Monterey County.

Many seniors and people with disabilities can’t remain in their homes independently without some type of assistance. Assisted living and nursing homes are extremely expensive and most seniors and disabled people cannot afford to pay a caregiver nor the stay in those facilities. For example, care costs for Cypress Ridge Care Center in Monterey Ca is about $6,235 per month (CRCC, 2018). This is ridiculous expensive. This is why In-Home Supportive Services program is very beneficial for those populations to remain safely in their home. According to the California Department of Social Services, the IHSS recipients 16% are 85 years of age or older, 41% are ages 65-84, 36% are disabled adults and 7% are under the age of 2 (CDSS, 2016). As the senior population continues to grow due to the baby boom, these percentages are likely to increase.

Contributing Factors

There are some contributing factors that lead to people living with disabilities and seniors to go into a nursing home or an assisted living facility maybe against their wishes. For example, there is a cultural and language barrier that goes along with Hispanic seniors and disabled people not to receive services from this agency. Also, the senior population is growing and many are not receiving services due to the lack of program awareness.

The cultural and language barrier in the Hispanic population is a contributing factor that prevent these populations from receiving services. Out of the entire Hispanic population in the United States, 76.3% only speak Spanish (CDC, n.d.). According to Furman et al, “clients are
often forced to navigate complex systems of bureaucracy to meet their basic needs. The social welfare needs of clients may be left unmet without the availability of adequate numbers of Spanish-speaking social service providers who can assist them in negotiating these systems.” (Furman, et al. 2009). Given that the majority of the population in Monterey County is Hispanic, the language barrier contributes to Hispanics not seeking social services.

Another contributing factor is that the elderly population is growing greatly. According to the National Center of Elder Abuse, “This “Boomer Generation” effect will continue for decades. Between 2012 and 2050, the United States will experience considerable growth in its older population. In 2050, the population aged 65 and over is projected to be 83.7 million, almost double its estimated population of 43.1 million in 2012. (NCEA, 2018). Because the Elderly population is growing, they will be needing the services from agencies to improve their quality of life. For this reason, outreach and raising the awareness of programs that help the elderly population are crucial to helping and supporting our seniors and adults living with disabilities.

The lack of awareness that the general public has about the services available to them is another contributing factor. A survey distributed by the Area Agency on Aging (2016), reported that 46% of the Monterey County population identified not knowing who or where to ask/find for services as a barrier to receiving services (AAA, 2016). For this reason, people do not get services in the county which leads to seniors and people with disabilities not receiving services that would help their quality of life. This factor contributes to the lack of services provided not only to the elderly and disabled population but for the entire county.

Consequences
The consequences of not providing seniors and disabled adults with services can be very unfortunate. For example, elder abuse can be a consequence because if no adequate care providers are available for our seniors, people could potentially abuse our elders. As explained by Acierno (2010), et al, “Extrapolated data indicated that approximately 1,000,000 US adults had experienced abuse since reaching age 60 years, with 2% reporting physical abuse and 1.1% verbal abuse. Only approximately 1 in 14 cases was reported to authorities” (Acierno, et al, 2010, pg. 202). If seniors don’t receive services such as the IHSS program, they would end up being cared for by people who can potentially abuse them.

Another consequence could be injuries from falls. Elderly people living alone can be a dangerous issue. With no care and assistance many seniors are suffering from falls. As reported by Day (2016), et al, “While the incidence of falls varies between countries, global population aging means that falls in older adults will become an increasing source of mortality, disability, and poor health in the years ahead” (Day, et al, 2016, pg. 45). This is an increasing concern because the goal is to help seniors remain safely at home and data is showing that this problem continues to increase as time goes on. “Between 28% and 39% of people aged 65 years and over fall each year, and 11–21% experience multiple falls (Day et al., 2016, pg. 45). These numbers are alarming because with falls, many adverse health outcomes can follow, such as, fractures, depression, mobility, or other injuries.

**Problem Model**
Project Description and Justification

**Project Title:** No Senior or Persons with Disabilities Left Behind

The project’s intention was to inform people about the IHSS program by creating special county brochures that explain the program to the applicants. The current brochures both in English and Spanish were outdated and difficult to understand and don’t have contact information if a person wants to know more about the program. Also, outreach is another part of the project because the program is not very known in the county so ideally it would be beneficial to increase the awareness of the existence of this program through the distribution of these brochures and reaching out to the partnering agencies so that they can have brochures and information that explains what the program has to offer. In addition, a presentation was done to the partnering agency that might potentially refer their clients to the program. This project allowed the agency to help more seniors and people with disabilities and help the community in general through their services.

The purpose or goal of this project was to invite people to apply for the services that the Aging and Adult Services agency has to offer. The agency expected to inform the people and collaborating agencies to spread the word about the services that the agency offers as well as to
understand who can qualify for the programs that they offer to the community. The goals were to serve more seniors and people with disabilities.

This project definitely and positively impacted the community because it helped people and specially seniors and people with disabilities stay at home independently and supported by a caregiver to perform the tasks that they need help completing. Assisted living and nursing homes are extremely expensive and many of our seniors can’t afford that type of care, this is why the implementation of this project is crucial to spread the word about its existence to the growing older population.

**Project Implementation**

The implementation of this project consisted of 3 components: the creation of county brochures, both in English and Spanish, one presentation, and delivering brochures to the potential agencies who would refer clients. The brochures were created with help of the IHSS social workers who had a better understanding of what the program is about. The content of the brochures was revised by the program managers on several occasions in a period of two months to make sure the content was accurate and informative as well as the formatting of the brochure was neat and professional looking. Because the brochure had to be translated in Spanish, it was revised by Spanish speaking experts to ensure they were perfect in grammar wise. After the brochures were approved, the printing process started right away and the delivery of brochures as well.

These brochures and presentation explained more about the program and helped raise its awareness. The implementation of this project took place at several agencies and organizations. By having the brochures created and printed, and then contacting the organizations and
nonprofits, this process helped with raising the awareness of the program. Agencies were picked according to who they provide services to, especially if they serve the elderly and the disabled people in the county. The organizations that were appropriate for this project were long-term care facilities, hospices, hospitals, and agencies who already provide services to the elderly population and disabled adults and children. Several agencies were contacted to schedule an IHSS presentation, the PowerPoint used in the presentation was updated and copies of it were distributed among the participants at the presentation.

**Evidence-based:**

The method that guided this project is the communication infrastructure theory. According to Wilkin et al (2011), “The communication infrastructure is the basic communication system available within a community and is relied upon by residents for the information needed in their everyday lives. It consists of two elements: (1) the storytelling system and (2) the communication action context.” (pg. 202) IHSS has been a program that has been reported to be known by the word of the people who are already recipients of the program. This communication theory has been very useful to raise the awareness of the program but it can only do so much. As explained by Wilkin et al (2011), “Communities also have cultural, religious, neighborhood, homeowner, political, educational, sports and recreation, and other forms of locally based organizations that have the potential to act as neighborhood storytellers.” (pg. 202) This is a great way to have the community involved and informed about the local programs and organizations that can help people in the community. This is why brochures and presentations are great methods to spread the word about the wonderful programs that exist locally.

**Participants:**
After the creation and delivery of county brochures, there was one presentation conducted at The Health Projects Center. The agency’s staff participated by guiding and giving the necessary information about the agencies and organizations that were contacted. Also, the program supervisor played an important role by approving the project, and giving feedback on the brochures. Additionally, the staff played a role in the project by supporting with feedback as well as printing the brochures. Also, the collaborating agencies/organizations/nonprofits such as La Casa, Meals on Wheels, Alliance on Aging, La Gloria Senior Apartments, etc. played a role in the implementation of the project because they participated in receiving the brochures and handing them out to potential clients.

The resources needed to execute the project were materials such as paper to print the brochures in color. A computer to create, format, design and perfect the brochures so they can look professional. Also, packaging materials were necessary to mail the brochures to the pertinent organizations as well as help from the staff to help to deliver presentations because the audience from the collaborating agencies or organizations might have very specific questions. Also the power point that was updated to deliver the presentations was a very important resource to reference the information. Lastly, as means of transportation, a car was necessary to deliver brochures to organizations all across the county.

Scope of Work:

The scope of work included the project proposal to the program supervisor who determined if the project was beneficial for the agency and the community at large. Next, the completion of the brochures by the end of September so that the distribution of them could can start as soon as the brochures are printed. Then, contacting pertinent agencies to distribute the brochures and ask them if they would be interested in having presentations, this was accomplished by
delivering the brochures personally to the agencies, and also meeting with staff to answer any questions that they might have about the program. Lastly, the last step was to determine the effectiveness of the brochures. The plan was to have at least 2-3 presentation at agencies that serve the targeted population and have the staff of those agencies complete a short questionnaire to help determine if the presentation was effective and informative.

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The challenges or obstacles were the lack of response from agencies/organizations who were invited to participate in this project, as well as them refusing to a presentation to their staff because of their busy schedules. These challenges were resolved by staying persistent on contacting agencies and personally asking them to agree to a presentation. Also, the timeline was
a challenge because since it is a governmental agency, there are more people involved in approving and getting the project moving.

**Project Results**

The project’s outcome was the increase in awareness of the In-Home Supportive Services program. The project informed the public about the benefits of the program, what it can and can’t do, and who is eligible. The goal was to deliver brochures, 25 in English and 25 in Spanish to each agency or organization. The plan was to personally deliver brochures to 20 agencies throughout the county. To determine the effectiveness of the project, there was a comparison among the number of recipients who had applied for the program prior and after the distribution of brochures and the presentation. These numbers were recorded by the program manager who receives a report of how many IHSS applications were submitted each month. The assessment concluded that the number of IHSS applications for the month of September, before the delivery of brochures and the presentation was 157 applications in total. After the implementation of the project, the number of IHSS applications for the month of October increased to 189. Moreover, the number of applications received by the Senior Information, Referral & Assistance operators increased by 32 applications. This method aided to determine the overall effectiveness of the project.
Although, there was an increase in applications for the program, it was unclear if the brochures and presentation were the only reason that led to this outcome given that there could be many more variables that could have an effect on the outcome. For example, when applicants call to apply for the program, it was not recorded if they heard about the program because of a brochure, a referral or if someone told them about it. The evaluation could have been more accurate if the agency recorded that type of information to determine if the project was the reason for the increase in applications.

The original plan was to deliver several presentations throughout the county at agencies that would potentially refer clients to the program as the other part of the project. Though 8 agencies were contacted to have a presentation, only one agreed to have the presentation for their agency staff. The presentation took place in The Health Projects Center in Salinas. The presentation was assessed through a brief questionnaire given to the participants at the end of it to evaluate the knowledge gained. The presentation covered information about the application process and eligibility criteria as well as resources to help applicants find a care provider. After the evaluation of the responses from the questionnaire, it was determined that 100% of the
participants felt confident referring clients to the program. on the other hand, 86% of the participants reported that they were satisfied with the content of the presentation.

![IHSS Presentation Satisfaction](image)

The strength of the project that led to the desired outcome was that the agency for the first time ever adopted an outreach effort to bring more applicants into the program. This kind of project was never done before in this agency. These new brochures replaced the old and outdated brochures and will be available for the agency to use over and over again. Also, because there was actual interaction with other agencies and organizations, this project bridged the communication gap between the Aging and Adult Services and the participating agencies. The limitations on the other hand, consisted in the lack of time to implement and assess the project. The evaluation would have been more accurate if there was more time to let the brochures reach the community.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This project was a great way to raise the awareness of the program to seniors and people with disabilities. It gave the community a source of information with help of collaborating agencies and organizations that already serve these populations. The project increased the overall awareness of the program’s existence benefiting the community at large. The recommendations
for the agency is to keep delivering brochures to partnering agencies and organizations at least once every other month to keep other agencies up to date with information and changes about the program. By doing so, more people will learn about the program and many more seniors and people with disabilities will be benefitting from the program by applying for it. Continuing the delivery of brochures and doing presentations will lower the number of people being unaware of the social services that are available in the community.

**Personal Reflection & Final Thoughts**

**Personal/professional growth:**

This project gave me the opportunity to learn more about the issue of many low-income seniors and persons with disabilities not receiving social services in Monterey County because of the lack of awareness. It opened up my eyes and made me really care about our seniors and people living with disabilities who face challenges in their everyday lives because they do not have social services that can help them strengthen their quality of life. This project impacted me in a very strong way because I learned about the impact of receiving social services can have on other people’s lives.

This project was definitely challenging in so many ways. The creation of brochures was a very stressful process, because the Aging and Adult Services is a governmental agency directed by the state, the approval of the completed brochures was very time consuming. This made me learn a life lesson, even with the greatest intent and passion that you give out to something and even if you plan it with time ahead, there’s always something that doesn’t go as planned. This creates tension, stress, and frustration. All of this taught me to stay optimistic and be persistent as well as to work with the best that you have and make it work.
This project benefited the agency because now they have a brand new brochure that better explains the program with better graphics and pleasant to look at. I feel accomplished that the brochures that I created will still be used in the time to come by the agency and that is very gratifying. I hope these brochures can reach many audiences and stay in the community for a very long time.

**Broader social significance:**

The broader social problem that the project relates to and addresses is the lack of affordable services that are out there for seniors and people living with disabilities or the lack of awareness of them. Another broader social issue that the project relates to is abuse in elders. When our seniors are cared for by people that mistreat them, financially abuse them or even physically abuse them, often times all these crimes are not reported. According to Walton Law (2016), that “only one of every 14 cases of elder abuse is reported” (Para. 1). The project purpose was to get as many seniors to apply for the program as possible so that they can be cared for by appropriate people and help decrease elder abuse rates.

A lot more has to be done to help diminish this social problem in our communities. There has to be more awareness of the problem itself as well as services that aid the problem to decrease. Many times people do not know what social, financial, housing etc. services are available to them and efforts should be focused on spreading the word about these services to help our community’s quality of life.

The best advice that can be given to future capstone students working in the Aging and Adult Services agency to always be proactive and eager to learn and work. The passion must be present and it will transcend in all the work that the student does. As far as other students
working on this project in the future, the best advice that they can receive is to always plan ahead, have plenty of time for things to go wrong, because you better trust, it will happen so it’s better to always be prepared to solve problems and unforeseen circumstances. Also, another advice is to be determined and do not give up, success doesn’t come with a few or a lot of challenges. Remember as the saying suggests “nothing worth having comes easy.”
Appendices

1. Brochure English

THE IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM
The IHSS program provides personal care and domestic services to people who live in their own home and are aged (over 65), blind, or disabled. The purpose of IHSS is to help people remain independent in the comfort of their own homes with some assistance, rather than moving to a skilled nursing or other care facility. This program is offered free of charge for those who qualify for SSI or Medi-Cal with no Share of Cost.

RESOURCES
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES, PLEASE CALL
831-755-4466
OR
1-800-510-2020

• SENIOR INFORMATION, REFERRAL & ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (I,R&A)

• PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR IHSS

• AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA)

• ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)

MONTEREY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES-AGING AND ADULT SERVICES
1000 South Main St. Suite 211-C
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4466
www.mcdss.co.monterey.ca.us
WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- Aged (over 65), blind, or disabled individuals
- Low income (eligible for Medi-Cal or SSI)
- Persons who need assistance to safely complete one or more IHSS covered tasks
- Persons who are planning to return home from a care facility or are homeless should call for more information about eligibility

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Call to Apply: 1-800-510-2020 or 831-755-4466 during business hours to apply. Business hours are Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

2. Medi-Cal: If you do not already have Medi-Cal or SSI, a Medi-Cal application will be mailed to you. Complete the application as soon as possible. If you need help with the Medi-Cal application or have additional questions in regards to Medi-Cal, call MC-Choice at 1-866-361-0477.

3. Health Care Certification: The Health Care Certification form will be mailed to you after your initial application is taken over the phone. You have 45 days to have your doctor complete the form from the day it is mailed to you. Completion of this form is mandatory.

4. Home Visit: An IHSS Social Worker will contact you by mail or phone to schedule a Home Visit. They will come to your home to assess your need for services.

Examples of Tasks Covered by IHSS

- Cleaning, cooking, shopping for food, picking up medication, laundry, personal care (bathing, dressing, toileting, accompaniment to medical appointments, etc.)

Examples of Tasks NOT Covered by IHSS

- Help with paying bills, mail, paperwork, gardening, yard work, pet care, social visits or outings, moving furniture and other belongings
2. Brochure in Spanish
¿QUIÉN DEBERÍA APLICAR?

- Adultos (mayores de 65), personas con problemas de la vista o con discapacidades
- Personas de bajos ingresos (elegibles para Medi-Cal o SSI)
- Personas que necesitan asistencia para realizar una o más de las tareas cubiertas por IHSS
- Personas que están por regresar a su hogar de una instalación de cuidado especial o personas que no tienen hogar deben llamar para obtener información acerca de elegibilidad para el programa

PROCESO DE APLICACIÓN

1. **Llame para aplicar al:**
   
   1-800-510-2020 o 831-755-4466 durante horas hábiles de trabajo.
   
   Horas de servicio lunes a viernes de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m.

2. **Medi-Cal:** Si usted aún no tiene Medi-Cal o SSI, se le enviará una aplicación. Complete la aplicación lo más pronto posible. Si necesita ayuda con la aplicación o tiene preguntas adicionales acerca de Medi-Cal, por favor comuníquese con MC-Choice al 1-866-361-0477.

3. **Certificación de Salud:** La forma de certificación de salud se le enviará por correo después de que haya aplicado por teléfono. Usted tiene 45 días para que su doctor complete esta forma. La completitud de esta forma es obligatoria.

4. **La Visita al Hogar:** Un trabajador social de IHSS se comunicará con usted por correo o teléfono para agendar una visita a su hogar. El trabajador social irá a su casa para evaluar su necesidad para los servicios del programa.

Ejemplos de tareas cubiertas por IHSS

- Limpiar, cocinar, compras de comida, recoger medicamentos, lavar ropa, cuidado personal (bañar, vestir, ir al baño, acompañar a citas médicas etc.)

Ejemplos de tareas NO cubiertas por IHSS

- Ayuda para pagar facturas, correo, pepeleo, jardinería, cuidado de mascotas, visitas sociales, mover muebles u otras pertenencias
3. **Scope of Work table**

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4. IHSS Presentation Survey

In-Home Supportive Services Presentation Survey

Please read the questions and circle only one answer.

1. Please rate from 1-5 your knowledge about the IHSS Program before the presentation.
   - 1- I had no idea
   - 2- I have heard of it
   - 3- I kind of know what it is
   - 4- I know what it is
   - 5- I know exactly what it is

2. The content of the presentation was clear.
   - 1- Strongly Agree
   - 2- Agree
   - 3- Neutral
   - 4- Disagree
   - 5- Strongly Disagree

3. After the presentation, I feel confident referring clients to the program.
   - 1- Strongly Agree
   - 2- Agree
   - 3- Neutral
   - 4- Disagree
   - 5- Strongly Disagree

4. Please rate you overall satisfaction with the presentation
   - 1- Very Satisfied
   - 2- Satisfied
   - 3- Neutral
   - 4- Not satisfied
   - 5- Completely not satisfied
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