

Solano County Health & Social Services Department

Mental Health Services
Public Health Services
Substance Abuse Services
Older & Disabled Adult Services



Employment and
Eligibility Services
Children's Services
Administrative Services

Patrick O. Duterte

275 Beck Ave.-MS 5-200
Fairfield, CA 94533

Ph: 707-784-8400
Fax: 707-421-3207

June 13, 2011

Honorable D. Scott Daniels
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

RE: *Response to 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report (April 22, 2011) – Administration of the Food Stamp Program by the Department of Health and Social Services*

Dear Honorable Presiding Judge D. Scott Daniels:

As mandated by California Penal Code sections 933 (c) and 933.05, the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services comments on the following findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of this office and contained in the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report entitled "Administration of the Food Stamp Program by the Department of Health and Social Services."

Finding 1

Between fiscal years 2008 and 2010, there has been a 33 percent increase in the number of people receiving food stamps in Solano County causing an increased workload for the employees staffing the program.

Response to Finding 1

Health and Social Services – The Health and Social Services Department agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1

The Health and Social Services Department should continue to monitor the adequacy of the staff to administer the Food Stamp Program.

Response to Recommendation 1

Health and Social Services – This recommendation has been implemented. The Health and Social Services Department will continue to monitor staffing and caseloads. The Department would like to note that Solano County has a Quality Control Unit that gathers pertinent information for case analysis to determine if the household is eligible and receiving the correct amount of benefits. This analysis is the

basis for determining a county error rate, which when combined with other California county error rates, determines and establishes a state performance error rate. A state performance error rate that exceeds the federal tolerance level can result in financial sanctions imposed on the state and passed down to counties exceeding the tolerance level.

The Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 national payment error rate of 4.36% represents the lowest rate in the history of the program and Solano County has remained under the federal tolerance level for the past eight years and completed FFY 2010 with an error rate of 1.88%, or an accuracy rate of 98.12%.

The Solano County CalFresh error rate for the FFY 2011 is 0.29%. The County's goal for the FFY is to remain under a 3.0% CalFresh error rate.

Finding 2

The income re-verification is currently being performed quarterly, but discussion is underway to expand the time period to six months.

Response to Finding 2

Health and Social Services – The Health and Social Services Department agrees with the finding, but notes that these discussions are occurring between federal and state staff, not at the county level.

Recommendation 2

Solano County Department of Health and Social Services should express to State officials the necessity of continuing the income re-verification at the three-month level. They should stress the potential financial risk involved, whether intentional or unintentional, with changing the income re-verification process to six months.

Response to Recommendation 2

Health and Social Services – This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The issue of quarterly versus semi-annually re-verification is driven by Federal rules and regulations that are requiring the change from the State. This is not a change the State is initiating on its own but is obligated to comply with Federal regulations since they oversee and fund the program.

Comments

According to the Director of County Health and Social Services, the Food Stamp Program is now called "CalFresh" by the State of California.

Response to Comments

Health and Social Services – The name for the California's Food Stamp Program has changed as a result of recent State law. In September 2008, AB 433 was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requiring the California Department of Social Services to modernize the name of the Food Stamp

Program. The purpose was to create a positive new identity that encourages eligible Californians to use the program. The name change will not change benefits and the amount of CalFresh benefits will not be different because of the name change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patrick O. Duterte".

Patrick O. Duterte
Director

cc: Grand Jury
CAO