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In Brief

Dion Aroner, former Assemblywoman from Berkeley, California, who was the chair of the Assembly Human Services Committee, and receptive to the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), conducted training program for the County Welfare Directors teaching them how to “influence” the State Legislators. The “influence” can very likely result in more and more victims of county welfare departments as we have printed in this Bulletin in the past and will continue to do so.

Inter-County transfer cases with overpayments have been causing problems.

A case is transferred from County “A” to County “B”. The case has an overpayment. County “B” starts collecting the overpayment, but never lets County “A” know how much is being collected. Thus, often overpayments collected by County “B” show up as uncollected by County “A”. Sometimes there are tax intercepts to recoup overpayments that have already been recouped. This seems like “county money stealing”, but there are no laws against this kind of theft. The victims do not even get an apology letter from the money stealing county.

Department of Health Services wants to do quarterly reporting for Medi-Cal, but it would be different from the CalWORKs and Food Stamps quarterly reporting; anything to confuse people.

DSS’s AB 429 30-day temporary absence payment opposed by CWDA. This proposal would provide a 30 day temporary Cal-

WORKs benefits to parent(s) whose children have been removed from their homes. But giving 30 days of aid to parents whose kids have been taken away by the county, generally because they are poor, did not sit well with CWDA. Helping the poor parents for 30 days? No way. Mean-spirited Riverside County was nominated to craft an Issue Paper to Oppose helping these impoverished parents. This mean-spirited Issue Paper was presented to the CWDA CalWORKs committee and supported. And who says that CWDA does not have a heart? They have a heart of stone.

Homeless Assistance When the HA month has been unticked.

What happens when child support has fully paid back the cash aid and homeless assistance for a particular month? The CalWORKs recipient should be eligible for homeless assistance again. This issue was raised at the 5/1/03 CWDA CalWORKs Committee meeting. DSS representative Linda Latimore said she is working on this issue. Stay tuned for more.

Capital Report - Sacramento



It is June 15th and still no budget. The budget conference committee shut down without reaching the major decisions relative to the budget. Now it will be up to the so-called “Big Five”, which is Governor Davis, President Pro-Tem John Burton, Speaker Wesson, Senate Minority Leader Brulte and Assembly Minority leader Cox. This is democracy in action - behind closed doors - a budget will surface and pass. When, no one knows.

The biggest issue for the poor is the CalWORKs COLA. There are also some other minor issues, such as the repeal of fingerprinting, transitional food stamps, changing the auto resource rules, etc.

There is a good chance that the SSI and CalWORKs June 1, 2003 COLA will make it through, notwithstanding the opposition to the COLA of the Assembly Democrats and Republicans of both houses together with Governor Davis, who want to take money out of the mouths of poor babies and kids and give use it for a bigger bureaucracy. Thanks to Senate Democrats the COLA still lives.

CALL TO ACTION - Letters to Assemblyman Wesson and Assembly members supporting the CalWORKs COLA as a priority over funding the bureaucracy would be welcome.

ABAWDS Denied Food Stamps Unlawfully

Federal law changed in 1996 during the malicious attack launched by Republican lawmakers in Congress and supported by then President Clinton. The law limits Food Stamps for single persons and childless couples to three months unless such person is working 20 hours a week or performing involuntary servitude duties for the government in return for the food he or she eats. These victims are known as ABAWDS, which stands for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents.

The food stamp law provides for an exception to this mean-spirited 3-month rule. If a county has an unemployment rate over 10% or if the county, city or particular zip is designated as a "labor surplus area" by the federal government, then the 3 month rules do not apply.

In California, today, 27 counties meet one of these definitions, but only 8 counties are obeying the law. The counties of Alpine, Calaveras, Colusa, Imperial, Kern, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Mendocino,

Plumas, San Benito, Shasta, Sutter, Tehema, Trinity and Yuba are unlawfully refusing to waive the ABAWDS requirements, thus literally, blindly, stealing money from the poor people of their county. And these immoral thieves have the gall to talk about "welfare fraud" when they are committing the crimes of theft from the poor on a daily basis without any shame or remorse.

Los Angeles County should also be exempting ABAWDS individuals from the cities of Compton, El Monte, Huntington Park, Inglewood, La Puente, Los Angeles, Lynnwood, Maywood, Paramount, River, Pomona, Rosemead and South Gate. But Los Angeles County that has millions to waste on home visits activities to harass the poor refuse to provide food stamps to the needy of Los Angeles just to show how mean they are.

CCWRO is looking for persons who cannot get food stamps in these counties and cities. If you have a victim, let us know. We must fightback.

DSS News

Charlotte Rutkowska of Orange County e-mailed the following message to DSS on February 3, 2003 to May Otow:

" We would like to request a waiver of the Program requirements for domestic abuse victims who were unable to enroll in a SIP prior to Appraisal due to the domestic abuse environment the lived in at the time; including isolation threats.

With approval of this waiver of Program requirements, any recipient with evidence of domestic abuse could become a SIP after Appraisal. We see this waiver as a very positive tool in assisting the recipient with a domestic abuse history in taking control of their lives. We would be opening opportunities to them when they may not have had the chance to safely enroll in a SIP prior to Appraisal.

References:

42-711.52 Appraisal
42-711.54 SIPs
42-715.121 Evidence of domestic abuse
42-715.5 Waiver of program
 Requirements

On February 4, 2003, Mary Otow responded as follows

“Charlotte, domestic abuse is covered in our regulations in MPP 42-715 and is typically handled by Work Support Services...”

CCWRO OBSERVATION: Charlotte was not asking about domestic abuse policy, she was asking for a waiver. A call to Orange county revealed that to date this waiver has not been approved and victims of domestic abuse continue to suffer by DSS’s refusal to grant the waiver.

CWD Victim of the Week

In Los Angeles County, a disabled person was asked to participate in the WtW program. She did not participate because he was disabled. Moreover, she never received the notices for participation or the notices for good cause determination, because she had moved and the mail went to the wrong address. Los Angeles County Welfare Department were aware of the change of address, but given the complete incompetence of the DPSS administration the CalWORKs program, the notices went to the wrong address.

On December 31, 2002, Hasan Karwa of LA DPSS asked DSS whether an over one year long sanction imposed upon someone who was disabled and is still disabled can be rescinded?

Audrey King of DSS asked for some additional information. Hasan responded that the victim was in the hospital when she was scheduled for good cause determination. Of course, that did not stop Los Angeles County from meeting their primary objective- sanction at all costs.

DSS DELAYS CalWORKs COLA

CCWRO received a letter from DSS on June 5, 2003 stating that if the Legislature does not suspend the CalWORKs COLA during the week of June 5, 2003, that DSS will be instructing counties to issue the COLA.

We contacted DSS on Friday, June 13 to find out if they will be issuing instructions to counties. DSS responded that during the week of 6/16/03 they will issue instructions to counties to issue the COLA. Stay tuned.

On January 10, 2003, DSS issued the following e-mail: “ Okay, I’ve talked to Legal. We recommend that LA give the individual their portion of the grant back to the time that aid was reduced. She notified Eligibility of her new address before the NOA was sent and was in the hospital at the time of her good cause appointment. Given that the county sent the NOA to the wrong address and she had good cause to not attend the compliance appointment (even though the evidence was provided extremely late), we think the county will lose at a hearing.”

LA County informed CCWRO that this victim and her kids received all of the money back that was withheld from them

WtW Disability Exemption News - At the May 1, 2003 meeting of CWDA DSS again state that it is DSS policy that any person who is partially exempted, is totally exempted. Thus, if a person has verification that he or she cannot work more than the 23 or 35 hours that they are required to work, then such person is exempt. A simple statement from the doctor that the person cannot work more that 32/35 hours shall meet the DSS regulatory requirements that the disability be verified. Some counties have been unlawfully forcing CalWORKs participants to get a CW 61 completed by a physician. This is ILLEGAL. State regulations do not require a CW61 to very disability exemption. Moreover, the CW 61 violates confidentiality, in that it reveals that the person is a welfare recipient, and not just a Medi-Cal patient.