

AUG 12 1985

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

# Placer primes for workfare

## Pending legislation creates sweeping welfare reforms

By Marganne Meyer  
Journal News Editor

Workfare for welfare recipients is an inevitability, according to Ray Merz, director of the Placer County Welfare Department.

In anticipation of the Legislature passing a pending bill for sweeping welfare reforms, Merz will meet with the county Board of Supervisors 9:30 a.m. Tuesday to discuss how it will affect his department.

The legislation was introduced to the Assembly July 18. Merz said he expects it will sweep through the Legislature and could become law by next February.

If enacted, able-bodied welfare recipients would get job training and help finding work. If they remained on welfare beyond specified time limits, they would be required to earn their benefits on

public-service projects and other jobs.

The compromise measure has an excellent chance to become law due to bipartisan support hammered out by Assemblyman Art Agnos, D-San Francisco, and Secretary of Health and Welfare David Swoap, Merz said. The two helped to combine some five different workfare bills working their way through the Legislature.

Placer County has approximately 2,400 cases receiving Aid for Families with Dependent Children. At least half of those could be affected by the new law, Merz said.

If enacted, counties would have two years to gear up the program, he said. The first step would be to make an assessment of each case, which could be done on a contract basis.

(Please see WELFARE, A-18)

## WELFARE

(Continued from A-1)

The program will be funded 100 percent by the state. It will be up to the county to decide whether it is best to contract for the services or hire new county employees. Some counties have had to create entire divisions to handle the welfare workloads, Merz said.

The program focuses statewide on 300,000 recipients whose chil-

dren are older than 6. Recipients would be required to outline their job goals.

Those services would include child care for children under 12, books, equipment needed for jobs or training, and transportation to and from work or school.

Those who fail to participate would be penalized by having the county welfare department manage their grants for three

months. If their failure continues, they could be dropped from the welfare rolls.

The Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations opposes the bill. Placer County's representatives, Assemblymen Jear Duffy, D-Sacramento, Assemblyman Norm Waters, D-Plymouth, and Sen. John Doolittle, R-Citrus Heights, have not taken a stand on the bill.