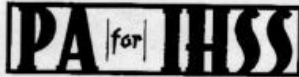


# **Attachment E**

## **Stakeholder Letters of Support**



6955 Foothill Blvd., Suite 300  
Oakland, CA 94605-2409  
Tel: 510-577-3552; TDD: 510-577-3549

October 7, 2004

Sherry Baron, MD  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
4676 Columbia Parkway R-10  
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Dear Ms. Baron:

We are writing on behalf of the Public Authority for In-Home Supportive Services in Alameda County to express our enthusiasm for continuing our participation with NIOSH to improve the health and safety of In-Home Supportive Service homecare workers.

Our participation to date has been very fruitful – offering valuable information on the nature of risks for muscle and joint injuries, and moreover leading us to resources and ideas for preventing injuries. We have greatly benefited from the participatory health and safety workshops, which we continue to offer homecare workers. In addition, we now participate on a newly-formed Labor-Management Committee, along with SEIU Local 616, which represents Alameda County home care workers, and Alameda County Social Services which administers the In-Home Supportive Services program. The committee has the mandate and authority to address health and safety (and other) issues from programmatic and policy levels.

This newly proposed project to create a quality checklist will give us a valuable resource to continue our work, and potentially affect a much larger number of the over 11,000 homecare workers, and 12,000 consumers who benefit from their services. The checklist, by being a tool easily taken into the home, which is in essence the workplace for the homecare worker, will have the potential to have a broad impact

We are prepared to assist NIOSH with this project by attending meetings, offering input into the development of the checklist and seeking the collaboration of IHSS consumers and homecare workers in the project.

We feel that health and safety for homecare workers is a critical issue. Not only is it important for the wellbeing of homecare workers, but, as consumer advocates, we realize it has impact on the quality of life for consumers as well. Often what makes for a safe work environment for the homecare workers makes a safe home for the consumer. A healthy homecare worker can more consistently come to work and is less likely to leave the job.

We are very appreciative that NIOSH is willing to dedicate staff and resources to develop new tools that will address the work environment in a way respectful to both the needs of the

**PUBLIC  
AUTHORITY**

**FOR**

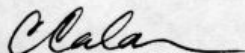
**IN-HOME  
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

**IN**

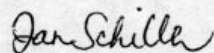
**ALAMEDA  
COUNTY**

homecare workers and the IHSS consumers. We welcome this opportunity to continue the collaboration and be part of this research project. If you should have any questions, please don't hesitate to call at 510-577-3548.

Sincerely,



Charles Calavan  
Executive Director



Jan Schiller  
Chair, Public Authority Advisory Board



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SCOTT HAGGERTY  
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT

October 18, 2004

Sherry Baron, MD  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
4676 Columbia Parkway R-10  
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Dear Ms. Baron:

We are pleased to offer our support for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's participatory action research project with homecare workers and IHSS consumers in Alameda County. The project is an excellent opportunity for promoting a safe working and living environment for both homecare workers and IHSS consumers.

Over the years, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors has been committed to the success of the In-Home Supportive Services program in our county. We were one of the first counties in California to create a Public Authority for IHSS with the mandate to provide services that enhance the IHSS program, including the training of IHSS homecare workers. More recently we ensured that the majority of IHSS homecare workers were offered employer-paid medical, dental and vision benefits. IHSS homecare workers provide a vital service to low-income elderly and people with disabilities in our community and therefore deserve good pay, benefits and working conditions. IHSS consumer advocates have long acknowledged that improved working conditions and benefits for homecare workers help ensure a skilled, reliable and sufficient workforce.

Your selection of Alameda County as a partner in this research will directly benefit our IHSS community and will support our long-standing commitment to be a national leader in providing health and safety education and resources, which improve the quality of life for thousands of homecare workers and consumers.

We look forward to hearing about the outcome of the proposal, and the fruits of your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Haggerty".

Scott Haggerty  
Alameda County Supervisor, District 1

1231 OAK STREET • SUITE 606 • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612 • 510 273-6691 • FAX 510 208-3910  
1501 PLEASANTON AVENUE • PLEASANTON, CALIFORNIA 94506 • 925 561-0906 • FAX 925 494-2809

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#### Local 616 Chapters

Alameda County

Alameda County  
Medical Center

Alameda County  
Court Reporters

AIDS Project  
of the East Bay

Head Start  
Spanish Speaking  
Unity Council

Hayward Area  
Recreation District

John E. Hill Law Office

Housing Authority  
of Alameda County

Homecare Workers

Trial Courts of  
Alameda County

Alameda County  
Retired Employees

**Nadia Frazer-Robinow**  
President

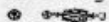
**Frances Jefferson**  
Executive Director

Service Employees  
International Union

AFL-CIO/CLC

337 17th Street  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Voice: 510/452-2366  
Fax: 510/452-2436

local616@seiu616.org  
www.seiu616.org



October 19, 2004

Sherry Baron  
NIOSH  
4676 Columbia Parkway  
Cincinnati, Oh 45226

Dear Ms. Baron,

We understand that you would like to continue the research work that NIOSH has initiated aimed at improving the health and safety for home care workers. Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 616 is interested in collaborating with NIOSH on this project.

Health and Safety is a significant concern in the homecare industry. In addition to low wages and inadequate benefits, aches and pains exacerbate homecare workers' stressful working conditions. Due to the informal work setting, health and safety guidelines have been difficult to implement. Homecare workers have little access to resources and minimal health and safety training, yet it is common that homecare workers are suffering from work-related injuries. Most homecare workers, who are active in the union, express the physical stress they suffer from caregiving. Once asked about injury, most homecare workers share a story of being hurt while providing care. When a homecare worker suffers from an injury, they often not only worry about their own pain, but also the needs of their client. They often wonder, "If I'm hurt, who will care for my client?" Occupational injury in the homecare industry negatively impacts both the provider and the client.

We are thrilled that NIOSH is interested in developing an intervention to address health and safety in the homecare industry. A complex industry, such as homecare, requires the expertise of all the stakeholders in order to implement a meaningful intervention. We are pleased to build upon past successful collaboration with NIOSH, the UC Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program, and the Public Authority for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) in Alameda County.

In expanding our efforts to improve the health and safety for home care workers we recommend also inviting a representative from the Alameda County Social Services Department. They are in a unique position to visit clients' homes during the initial eligibility evaluation and annual re-assessment.

Our previous project with NIOSH, the Health Hazard Evaluation Report: Alameda County Public Authority for In-Home Support Services, February 2004 was groundbreaking in the homecare industry. We valued this experience because the community-based nature ensured the intervention

would be pertinent to the community it targets. Some of the positive results that came from the research included homecare workers and consumers having an opportunity to discuss their experiences with occupational health and safety; a presentation of the research, including recommendations to a joint Labor-Management Committee, development of participatory curriculum, training for homecare workers in three languages, and most importantly, brought industry constituencies together to cultivate common goals for preventing workplace injuries.

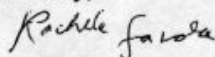
The SEIU Local 616 Homecare Chapter represents more than 10,500 IHSS workers in Alameda County. The majority of our members are 40-50 year old women who are low-income. Most are women of color. Many are recent immigrants. Some are monolingual. Considering not only the linguistic and cultural barriers, but also institutional and public policy factors, we appreciate NIOSH's approach to a creative, participatory health and safety intervention.

Our model of representation is to utilize a Workers Center where homecare leaders who have been trained now staff the center to help other members find jobs, resolve job problems, give out information regarding health benefits, make referrals to community agencies, provide support and friendship, and let workers know how they can get active in the union. We also use imaginative approaches to building internal union leadership such as a Hardship Fund and Committees based on language and ethnicity. We plan to use our relationships with homecare workers to assist NIOSH with this project by facilitating and coordinating access to homecare workers to participate in the project. We will identify, recruit, train and support homecare workers who participated in past health and safety activities and develop new leaders. Furthermore, we are offering our facilities to hold interviews, focus groups and meetings for the project. The homecare workers are accustomed to meeting in their union hall.

Also, we understand that in later years of the project homecare workers will be selected to participate in outreach and dissemination of the project and that this might require more intensive involvement from a smaller group of home care workers. We are excited to assist and facilitate this phase of the project.

We welcome the opportunity to continue this valuable research. If you have any questions, you can reach me at (510) 452-2366 ext. 511.

Sincerely,



Rachel Savola  
Homecare Organizer