



# COUNTY SERVICE CENTER GROUP

## BUDGET SUCCESSES IN A SERVICE CENTER ENVIRONMENT

### CSCG MISSION STATEMENT:

The County Service Center Group is committed to maintaining a membership organization which promotes continuous learning and the exchange of information and ideas between California County Medi-Cal/Food Stamp Service Centers. We partner in an ongoing effort to improve work processes and deliver quality service in a professional, timely and efficient manner.

### CSCG Member Counties:

- Contra Costa
- Sacramento
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Cruz
- Solano
- Sonoma
- Tulare
- Orange

Everyone else is talking about it so I suppose I should as well - THE BUDGET. How will it impact our workforce, our workload and our ability to make improvements? We now know that the Governor will most likely not be increasing eligibility requirements as previously threatened, but it is a threat that may have potential to resurface:

*"The governor's idea is not new: It was last proposed by then-Gov. Gray Davis during the budget crisis of 2003, although the Legislature eventually rejected the move. Critics of Schwarzenegger's plan called it a cynical approach to saving money." ...*

*"The governor has proposed cutting \$1.1 billion from the Medi-Cal program. He would cut some benefits and impose a 10 percent reduction in reimbursements to doctors and hospitals that provide services to Medi-Cal enrollees " SF Chronicle 2/25*

So the real message is to find ways to save money before the Governor finds a less 'cynical' approach and just simply reduces the allocation dollars to the counties.

The one thing that is a certainty is the need to do more with the existing workforce. The Service Center is proving to be one way to do that. By creating a distributed work environment and decoupling the task from the worker the service center allows the same number of people to do more work. Redistributing the work creates efficiencies by reducing the time it takes for the task to be worked by a worker. In real terms this means: no telephone tag, no waiting for a worker to come back from vacation - causing more telephone tag, no touching a case two or three times to process the same work, and more job specialization so the job gets done faster.

I like the way Kathy Gallagher from Santa Barbara put it:

*"This Call Center is a major change to our business model aimed at creating efficiencies that will actually save money over future years. We need to continue to look at our current mandates and processes for areas in which we can trim costs and become more efficient as we navigate through this recession over the next 2-3 years."*

I hope you find value in the CSCG newsletters and conference calls. Please call or email me with any topics you would like to have covered: [vdutto@intelegy.com](mailto:vdutto@intelegy.com). Thanks and keep up the good work !

~ Vail Dutto, CEO InTelegy

### UPCOMING CSCG NEWS:

—April Conference Call— Join InTelegy on Wednesday, **April 9, 2008, 12:30-1:30pm**, for the CSCG conference call. The topic is Disaster Recovery. Watch for your email invitation.

Mark your calendars for other upcoming CSCG Conference calls: September 10th and December 10th.

—Congratulations to Orange County for moving forward with the decision to implement a Service Center. With a population of over 3 million and eligibles of over 360,000 this will be the largest service center to date.

—October 29-31— CWDA Conference in Yosemite and 2nd annual CSCG reception.

—Fall 2008— Santa Barbara service center launch.

DISASTER RECOVERY IN A SERVICE CENTER ENVIRONMENT

STATISTICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

Not all calls are handled live in a typical service center. All of the county service centers have developed some upfront menus (IVR/VRU) to provide basic information to their clients. Unlike most commercial 800#s, where it is often a maze of menus to get to a live person, the county service centers have developed client friendly options and menus. Here are some stats of the number of calls that come into the service centers but that are not transferred to the phone staff:

- Tulare County- 21%
- San Francisco- 5%
- Santa Cruz- 18%
- Contra Costa-24%

In contrast, the California DMV typically has 38%+ of their calls handled by their IVR.

When you think of Disaster Recovery, what comes to mind? Helping your community through a natural disaster like a forest fire, mudslide, or earthquake; recovering lost data when a server goes down or your computer crashes; or being able to continue providing client service when the power is out or the building is flooded? All of these things should be considered when disaster recovery is discussed. In the upcoming CSCG Conference Call (April 9th, 12:30-1:30) we will conduct an open discussion of disaster recovery and we will touch on two different concepts of disaster recovery that should concern every county service center. First, the traditional definition of disaster recovery would be contingency planning for providing client service when your facility or technology is not functional. The second, much different definition- a unique opportunity for a county service center - is how the service center can support your community during a natural disaster. We will look into these two topics and provide ideas of how your organization can plan for a disaster. This idea sharing session will cover:

*Back up plans for client service operations:* (special guest speaker)

- Personnel Requirements during a disaster.
- Telephony and Facility requirements.

*Community Support opportunities:*

- How can your call center operation be turned into an emergency management operation in a time of a natural disaster. Leveraging your 800#, ACD and IVR.
- How to work with community leaders to develop a plan for community support.

We look forward to this discussion and brainstorming session. Watch for your email invitation—upon your response the conference call number and materials will be forwarded.

IN MEMORIUM

Mary Ann Tse of Foster City, passed away on January 9, 2008 after a long illness. Mary Ann Tse worked for San Mateo County Children's Protective Services for 36 years and was the pioneer of County Service Centers. Under her strategic direction and management the San Mateo Health Insurance Tele-Center (H.I.T.) was launched in November 2003. Due to Mary Ann's vision and drive, San Mateo took the risk to try this new approach to doing more with less and paved the way for the 9+ other counties who have currently implemented service center strategies and the others who will in the future.

SERVICE CENTER SUCCESS: CONGRATULATIONS TO SONOMA COUNTY

On November 13, 2007 Sonoma County accepted a California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Challenge Award for the Sonoma County Economic Assistance Service Center. The Challenge Award program recognizes the very best in county government. For the 2007 awards, CSAC received an impressive 260 entries from 42 counties, the highest level of participation in the program history. An independent panel of distinguished judges selected 12 winning entries based on demonstrated leadership, innovation, creativity, resourcefulness and the potential for other county programs to model. The Sonoma Service Center is estimated to save the county \$4.4 million over a 5 year period, along with an increased level of service to their clients. The Service Center serves more that 50,000 Medi-Cal, Food Stamp and County Medical Service Program clients a month. **Congratulations to Sonoma County for winning this prestigious award.** The "Call for Entries" for the 2008 Challenge Awards is due out this spring. If you would like to be included in the mailing, send your contact information to Lindsay Hall at [lhall@counties.org](mailto:lhall@counties.org).

We welcome member participation. Feel free to share your ideas, author a column, or refer a new member. Contact CSCG group administrator, Margaret Condie at: [margaretcondie@Intelegy.com](mailto:margaretcondie@Intelegy.com) or 925-786-7469.