

AREA AGENCY ON AGING
OF LAKE & MENDOCINO COUNTIES
GOVERNING BOARD

P.O. Box 9000, Lower Lake, CA 95457
16170 Main St. Unit F Lower Lake, Ca 95457

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lake County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Governing Board of Area Agency on Aging of Lake and Mendocino Counties

DATE: September 27, 2019

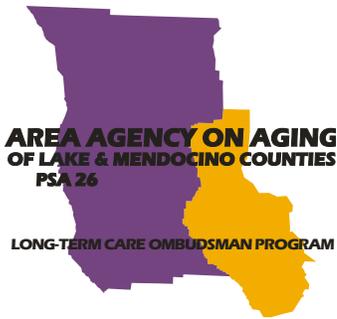
SUBJECT: Grand Jury Response “Delivering a Difference – Meals on Wheels”

While we appreciate the work of Grand Jury, the Area Agency on Aging of Lake and Mendocino Counties PSA26 Governing Board is concerned that some of what was reported about the local senior centers and their meal programs may give the public the impression the meals are not safe or good for our local seniors. The meals are in fact safe and nutritious. Without the hard work of our local senior centers and those who so graciously volunteer their time, many seniors in Lake and Mendocino Counties would suffer greater food insecurity and higher risk of isolation. The MOW program not only delivers nutritious food to homebound seniors, it also provides an opportunity for the individual to have social contact with another person.

R1. The directors of each senior center that prepare meals should meet once per month to compare purchases to determine if combined buying may reduce costs. (F1)

- AGREE, has been implemented
- AGREE, will be implemented within:
- NEUTRAL, requires further analysis
- DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

Purchasing of food together has been researched by the senior centers and there are challenges that would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the centers to save money. Food can only be delivered to one location so each senior center would have to pick up their portion of an order which would require a vehicle that has the capability of refrigeration, the time it would take for the center to pick up and bring back their products would lead to increased staff costs and fuel costs, the purchasing of food in bulk is already discounted so ordering together does not add any additional discounts, and orders could potentially be out of temperature control for an unsafe amount of time in order for the centers to sort and load their products.



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R2. Meal temperatures should be taken throughout the deliverer's route. MOW participants should be told to reheat their meal before eating. If the meal is not going to be eaten immediately, the meal then should be placed in the refrigerator. The senior centers can make a handout to distribute it to each participant to comply with this part of the recommendation. (F2)

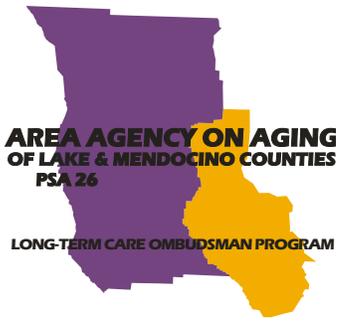
- AGREE, has been implemented
- AGREE, will be implemented within:
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- DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

According to the California Retail Food Code #114000, food must be delivered within four (4) hours of when it has left temperature control. Home delivered meals are transported in specialized containers that maintain heat or cold and are delivered with the four (4) hour time limit, and every Meals on Wheels client receives written instructions on the proper storage and reheating of their meal, which is verified by AAA during annual program monitoring. Meal temperatures are taken when the food leaves the center and when the last meal is delivered, and the temperatures are logged on the route sheet. The registered Dietician, contracted with AAA, conducts quarterly site visits to ensure that food temperatures are recorded daily and are meeting standards, food is transported appropriately and timely, calibration of temperature recording devices, and Environmental Health Report is available/posted for viewing. During the Annual Nutrition Program Monitoring AAA conducts a site visit to ensure the adherence to all California Department of Aging (CDA) rules and regulations which are governed by the Older Americans Act (OAA) and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

R3. Environmental Health should adhere to the expected number of inspections each year for each senior center. (F3)

- AGREE, has been implemented
- AGREE, will be implemented within:
- NEUTRAL, requires further analysis
- DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

Upon researching this finding it was determined that all AAA contracted Lake County senior centers have had an inspection done by



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Environmental Health in 2019. Inspection Report dates and scores are as follows, according to the Lake County Environmental Health's website:

Highlands Senior Center- completed 6/27/19 with a score of 99

Lakeport Senior Center- completed 5/8/19 with a score of 99

Live Oak Senior Center- completed 7/8/19 with a score of 99

Middletown Senior Center- completed 6/25/19 with a score of 98

R4. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) should re-evaluate how funds are being distributed to the senior centers for MOW. (F4)

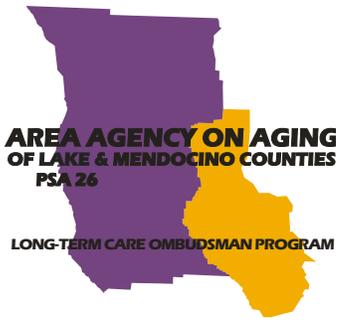
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The allocation of funds was re-evaluated at the 5/31/18 Governing Board meeting. Funding allocations are based on the actual number of meals served at each senior center and the percentage of funding that a center receives is based on a rolling 36 month average of their actual service units delivered, not the service unit requirements set forth in their contract. Contracted senior centers in Lake County exceeded their contracted amount of home delivered meals for fiscal year 2018-2019 by at least 26%. The senior centers contracted service units are based on the four (4) year Area Plan, which currently covers the period of 2016-2020. The 2018-2019 reimbursement rates based on actual number of meals served were \$1.37 for Highlands Senior Center, \$1.49 for Live Oak Senior Center, \$1.41 for Middletown Senior Center, and \$2.06 for Lakeport Senior Center.

R5. Compensation needs to be given and/or increased for the MOW drivers. (F5, F6)

- AGREE, has been implemented
- AGREE, will be implemented within:
- NEUTRAL, requires further analysis
- DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

F5- Due to the geographic layout and the rural areas of Lake County some routes take longer than others, the longest route among the senior centers takes roughly two (2) hours to complete. There is



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always a need for dedicated volunteers to help deliver meals to homebound seniors, but as it stands the senior centers are doing a commendable job with the number of volunteers they currently utilize.

F6-The Meals on Wheels program is a vital food resource for many seniors in Lake and Mendocino Counties with 167,500 home delivered meals being served during the 2018-19 fiscal year between the two (2) counties, without this program many seniors would not receive nutritious meals or the opportunity for socialization they receive when the driver brings their meal. The program relies heavily on volunteers who donate their time to help deliver these essential meals in the most cost effective way, and without those willing to generously volunteer their time, many of the centers would be unable to sustain the level of service they are currently providing. Each center has their own policy in regards to compensating volunteer drivers for gas or mileage and some volunteers decline to receive any compensation.

R6. Governmental officials should ensure that numbers are correct before issuing proclamations and postings. (F7)

- AGREE, has been implemented
- AGREE, will be implemented within:
- NEUTRAL, requires further analysis
- DISAGREE, will not be implemented. Explanation:

The proclamation was not prepared or submitted by the Area Agency on Aging Governing Board, but the amount is accurate for the 2017-18 number of meals served between Lake and Mendocino Counties, combined there was 237,139 meals served. The Area Agency on Aging PSA26 covers both counties under the Joint Powers Agreement between Lake and Mendocino Counties.