

Meeting With LA Support Staff

Re:

SHD Internal Assessment and Strategic

Planning Process:

November 26, 2012, 1:30PM

I. Pre-Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: Staff believes the communication and dialogue between the Sacramento and LA offices needs improvement.  
How to Fix:
  - a) Seems the Sacramento staff is overwhelmed.
  - b) Consequently, LA feels their requests are pushed aside.
  - c) This may be a customer service issue involving training-The staff would like the relationship to be viewed as everyone is "on the same team" and we are working in a cooperative effort with mutual goals.
  - d) One example cited was, "we should not have to beg to get an ALJ for Video hearings"-The staff indicated that they surmise the issue of ALJ availability may be a resource problem.
  - e) The staff indicated that the staff in the Bay Area office is very cooperative, professional and responsive to requests from the LA staff. Their communications and dialogue "run smooth" like, "we are on the same team."
  
2. Issue: Staff was made aware that the ALJs noted that cases on the queue backup sometimes because there are not enough **interpreters** present to cover the cases where interpreter services are needed.  
How to Fix:
  - a) if ASH would give him a list of the cases needing interpreters one week in advance of the hearings, staff could make sure there was adequate interpreter coverage. Regarding Spanish interpreters, assigning two (2) all day interpreters could avoid delays.
  - b) If delays occur due to an inadequate number of interpreters, staff use the interpreter present to explain to the claimant(s) waiting that their case(s) may be delayed so they can opt to wait or have their case postponed.
  - c) The CBAS cases caused a strain for interpreters-On these special program cases there need to be better communication about who to call when there are complaints or the staff are trying to solve a problem and need assistance.
  - d) Staff suggested that the data collection process as to interpreter use should be used to feedback from the ALJs on the quality of interpreters. The ALJs should be communicating to staff if there is a problem with a particular interpreter.

3. Issue: Scheduling problems occur in LA needlessly because it seems Sacramento sends everything to the LA office involving Region 19. However, LA continues to get cases involving Disability issues which must be redirected by LA to the Disability Hearings Bureau.

How to Fix:

- a) This may be a training issue.
  - b) Staff indicated that scheduling and hearing Scope of Benefit cases in LA would be a workload issue and resources would have to be added for support staff and ALJs.
  - c) LA ALJs do hear in person Scope cases.
4. Issue: Staff has observed that there are instances where claimants have been waiting unduly in reception without notice to the LA staff.

How to Fix:

- a) Management should discuss the issue with ASH to make sure the LA staff is always informed of the arrival of any and all claimants.

## II. Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: **Video Hearings**-LA staff indicated that they do not tell the claimant about having the option of their hearing being conducted in person. The claimant is simply told the hearing will be conducted by Video and they are escorted into the room. If staff has to give the claimant the option, they stated that the claimant would, undoubtedly, opt for in person. There was a discussion about claimant's opportunity to state a preference as to type of hearing but the setting of the hearing is determined by the SHD taking into consideration resource limitations.
2. Issue: Use of the Video equipment is working well. The office is getting new scanners.

## III. Post-Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: Staff indicated there was a secure file transfer problem involving Managed Care. No Managed Care folder could be found.>

How to Fix:

- a) This may be a training issue.
  - b) Furthermore, it appears decisions languish in the secure file transfer folder even though the purpose of the folder is to temporarily house the decisions that should be removed and processed immediately.
2. Issue: Calls to LA staff about the status of a decision should only occur for cases involving LA based ALJs. Calls about the status of decisions involving LA County are received by the LA staff even though the ALJ is based in Sacramento. LA staff has no access to Sacramento's server so it is impossible for them to check on the status so they have to refer the inquiry back. This is a needless delay in the process.

How to Fix:

- a) This may be a training issue.

- b) Before transferring a call to LA about an LA County case, the Customer Service Unit should identify the county and region, identify the ALJ, and then transfer the call to the appropriate region where the ALJ is housed.
3. Issue: Apparently due to processing problems with **return calendars**, there are gaps of delays in updating the status of cases.
4. Issue: **Cover Pages on Decisions:** Staff can make changes to the cover page but those changes do not appear on the system until the following day (PDF file problem?).

#### IV. Other Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: Staff was asked about their reaction to establishing a **Southern Call Center** to field calls concerning scheduling problems and requests for postponements within the region. The staff stated they would need to see how it would work and how it would be staffed.

Resources now doing the job and dedicated in the Northern Region would be redirected to the Southern Call Center.

Staff indicated that they like the idea, but there would need to be changes to notices in terms of addresses, phone #s, etc. They also said a new phone system would be needed (type to be determined with cost analysis).

There would have to be a comprehensive transfer plan concerning what, why, how and when questions answered.

Training would also have to be provided before the transfer occurred.

2. Issue: **Employee Recognition:** Staff was asked about how the Division could do a better job when upgrades, promotions and monetary awards are not possible.  
How to Fix:
  - a) Kudos from Supervisors and Managers about a staff member's "Shining Moment" should be recognized and published to the awardee and Division staff. This would be a "real morale booster"!
3. Issue: **Office Relocation:** Staff was asked their view about where the office should be located and the impact it would have on them individually if the present location was vacated by LA County.  
  
They opted for an office in the downtown area near the metro station and toward the Reagan Building.
4. Issue: **Office Furniture:** Staff indicated that they need new furniture. Most, if not all of the furniture has been around for years and is not serviceable.