

# FY 2016-18 Budget Workshop Board Inquiry Form

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Inquiry Number: 13

Department: Public Health Department

Date: April 13, 2016

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**Request/Question:**

Request for greater detail on the justification and scope of work for the PHD senior services nurse position



**PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

**Summary**

The purpose of the Public Health Nurse Program is to improve the health and/or safety of individuals age 60 or over who are living at home and are at risk due to significant medical and/or psycho-social needs. The Public Health Nurse will employ a person-centered approach to provide screening, in-home assessment, information, linkages, medical consultation and short-term case management. Senior care plans will be developed in coordination with families, care givers and community partners.

In addition to improving health and safety outcomes for individual seniors in Santa Barbara County, the program will collect data to inform future planning about senior needs and gaps in services. This information will be valuable in building a strong continuum of care to meet the needs of older adults in our community.

**Statement of Need**

The urgency behind this proposal is linked to demographic trends. Between 2010 and 2030, Santa Barbara County's population of adults over the age of 65 is expected to increase by 36,000 individuals or 66 percent. The need for senior support services is also compounded by longer life expectancy. As people age, functional abilities often decline and there is a higher incidence of chronic illness, physical disability and cognitive impairment.

Financial insecurity among the elderly is also a factor. In 2014, 6.5 percent of seniors in Santa Barbara County lived at or below the federal poverty level, while another 34% were above the poverty line but below the Elder Index (minimum income necessary to meet basic needs). Seniors who fall into this gap are often ineligible for public assistance programs and yet they are unable to pay for needed services. Health and safety can deteriorate as a result.

**Scope of Work for Public Health Nurse**

- Provide screening by telephone and conduct in-home assessment as indicated for 50 clients each month
- Assess the physical, psycho-social and health care status of referred individuals
- Identify clients needing medication review and reassessment
- Perform case consultation with physicians as appropriate
- Develop and implement short-term plans of care
- Coordinate and link with family members, care givers and other community partners to maximize client access to needed services and support
- Provide immediate response to urgent needs as presented (when health and/or safety are critically endangered)
- Maintain data about services provided and specific outcomes for individuals served, including program recidivism