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DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

State Hearings Division
744 P Street, MS 21-50, Sacramento, CA 95814-6485



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

Date : March 13, 2020

Re: CDSS State Hearings Division (SHD) Covid-19 Response

Dear Advocate Partners,

In the past several days, we have received inquiries from stakeholders on whether the SHD will move to phone hearings in response to the ongoing Covid-19 infection. Some counties have also indicated their management requested that all public facing meetings/contacts be cancelled, which will impact our ability to continue to access some hearing locations.

In conformity with the magnitude of this unprecedented emergency, the policy statements from the Governor's Office, the California Department of Health, the CDSS Departmental response, and to remain responsive and respectful of the health and safety of claimants and all involved in the state hearings process, the State Hearings Division (SHD) has made the determination that effective immediately, we are compelled to go to an all telephone hearing process through April 17, 2020. We will reassess this policy in two weeks to see if an extension is merited.

Our staff are actively contacting all claimants scheduled for hearings in the next few weeks, to inform them and their representatives that the hearings will be held by phone. Please be assured that any claimant who still wants to have an in-person hearing will be accorded that right so due process rights will not be abrogated by this necessary action. Cases will be scheduled in person when requested, and where logistic options such as availability of hearing sites fail, we will postpone in person hearings with good cause, so that aid paid pending can continue.

We appreciate your flexibility as we respond to this unprecedented situation. Our highest priority goal is to ensure the health and safety of all claimants, claimant representatives, county staff, and SHD staff at this time. We will keep you all informed as things progress.

Sincerely,

Juliet O. Macaulay

Deputy Director/ Chief Administrative Law Judge, State Hearings Division