



EMPLOYMENT &
HUMAN SERVICES

M E M O R A N D U M

Kathy Gallagher, Director

40 Douglas Drive, Martinez, CA 94553 • (925) 608-5000 • Fax (925) 313-9748 • www.ehsd.org

To: All Staff, Code 2A

Date: May 12, 2020

From: Kathy Gallagher 

Subject: CDSS Message: Beware of Fake Letter

Below is an important message from the **California Department of Social Services (CDSS)** about fake information being circulated on social media about a (non-existent) requirement that individuals receiving public benefits need to be tested for COVID-19 or will lose their benefits, and if they test positive their children will be taken into foster care. There is a website listed as well. All of this information, and the website, are fake and not reflective of any actual state or county policy.

You can see CDSS' message about the fake notice on the [CDSS website](#), with an immediate link on the front page. We are also in the process of linking to the cautionary message from EHSD.org.

CDSS Message: Beware of Fake Letter

We have become aware of a fake letter containing references to Merced County Human Services Agency that is circulating on social media. It includes the faked signature of a state official. The letter tells clients they must get tested for COVID -19 in order to continue their benefits. It also tells clients that if they test positive, their children will be removed into foster care. The letter asks people to visit a website, as well. The letter, its contents, and the website are fake.

We have alerted the appropriate county authorities for investigation. If you, your county counterparts or leadership receive this letter, please disregard it. State departments and county human services departments will NEVER ask about health status in connection to an application for benefits. Similarly, children must be subject to abuse or neglect to enter foster care. Children cannot be put into foster care just because a parent may be ill.

If you have helpful information about the source of the letter, or if anyone has questions or concerns about the authenticity of materials from the Department, please contact CDSS at (916) 651-8848 or piar@dss.ca.gov. We would appreciate your assistance in protecting Californians during this difficult time.