

California welfare recipients withdrawing money at casinos

By Jack Dolan, Los Angeles Times

California welfare recipients using state-issued debit cards withdrew more than \$1.8 million in taxpayer cash on casino floors between October 2009 and last month, state officials said Thursday.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger issued an executive order requiring welfare recipients to promise they will use cash benefits only to “meet the basic subsistence needs” of their families. The order also gave the state Department of Social Services seven days to produce a plan to reduce other types of “waste, fraud and abuse” in the welfare program.

The moves came after the *Times* reported Wednesday that officials at the department failed to notice for years that welfare recipients could use the state-issued cards to withdraw taxpayer cash at more than half of the tribal casinos and state-licensed poker rooms in California. The state initiated the debit card program in 2002.

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