

New Members

Promoting a strong local economy

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Members Renew Investment

The Mattress Outlet

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Beauty Secrets of Pismo Beach

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Promoting the community

Creating a strong local economy

Bean There, Done That

A profile of Lifesteps Foundation and the Wisdom Center

Recently I made a visit to the Santa Maria Wisdom Center with a group of our Chamber Ambassadors. Program Director Betsy Whitaker gave us a tour and a brief overview of their program. We were so touched by what we heard and saw that I wanted to share what we learned with you.

The Santa Maria Wisdom Center (part of Lifesteps Foundation) is an Adult Day Health Care Center for the disabled and frail elderly. Their objective is to enable this population to remain living in the community for as long as possible.

Participants take part in various recreational and social programs, but what makes the Wisdom Center unique is they offer medical oversight services. A Registered Nurse and a Licensed Vocational Nurse manage the health needs and act as a liaison between the participants and their physicians and families.

Lifesteps Foundation also provides a range of mental health services. About half of the

participants have a psychiatric diagnosis and are on anti-psychotic medications. These issues are monitored by a social worker and Licensed Clinical Social Worker to ensure participants remain stable. The social work staff also conduct one-to-one therapy sessions and group therapy sessions.

The Wisdom Center is primarily funded through the MediCal program. As you might know, in March legislators voted to eliminate all Adult Day Health Care Centers (ADHC) as a MediCal benefit with a contingency that \$85,000,000 be set aside for a transition for this group into a different type of ADHC program funded by the federal government. This was originally to happen through a waiver process; however, the waiver was vetoed by Governor Brown and the money was earmarked for transitioning this group into other services in the community.

The State is now pushing responsibility to CenCal—the Medi-

Cal managed care plan in this area. The state will pay CenCal \$60 per person, per month for their care. The Wisdom Center currently receives \$77 per person, which Betsy told us just barely covers costs. CenCal is trying to determine how they can provide the same care and stay within the reimbursement rate.

The official stop date for MediCal payments is December 1. The Wisdom Center is hoping to remain open and continue providing services, but they will have to find other funding sources including grants and private or corporate donations.

If you'd like more information on how you can help the Wisdom Center, contact Betsy Whitaker at bwhitaker@lifestepsfoundation.com.



Judith Bean
 President/CEO