



Family Shuffled by Adult Day Health Care Closures



California's new budget eliminates funding for the state's Adult Day Health Care Centers, which serve some 35,000 elderly and disabled people. The cuts may take affect this September. But eleven centers across the state have already decided to close.

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(sound of kitchen)

In a small ranch home in Rio Linda, seventy-year-old Paul Heyn prepares a microwave dinner for his family. His in-home health care worker is by his side.

HEYN: Good thing we have a microwave nowadays. It helps a lot. (Lorraine laughs)

Heyn's been busier than normal these days. The retired chicken rancher has a part-time janitorial job at his church. And he has another full-time job - at home - taking care of his two adult children. They have Huntington's disease - a condition that gradually destroys the brain. It has devastating effects on the ability to move, communicate, and think.

HEYN: They don't have control over their movements at times, they have problems speaking.

Deborah and Steven Heyn are both around 40 years old. They first showed signs of Huntington's about ten years ago.

They were able to do some things for themselves 2 and 3 years ago. Debbie was washing some clothes and making meals and Steve was doing some yard work up to three years ago. But it just gradually deteriorated to the point where basically they can't do anything for themselves.

Tonight Deborah and Steve shuffle stiffly into the kitchen, assisted by Paul and their caretaker Lorraine. They plop down heavily in their chairs across from each other at the dinner table, their eyes in fixed gazes. Steve is slumped forward, and is being fed by his dad. Deborah's head is cocked back. She has trouble swallowing her minced up food.

(AMB...Deborah coughing)

Deborah and Steve had been going to Robertson Adult Day Health Care for a few hours five days a week. Their health was supervised and Heyn says those few hours were important for all of them.

HEYN: They made many friends. It gave me a change to be able to do some of the things I hope to do like doctors visits, grocery shopping and reading my bible, stuff like that. (:17)

But when the Robertson center closed in early June because of budget troubles, Heyn's social life disappeared. Deborah and Steve were less active.

[Video link: Adult Day Health Care – The Heyn Family](#)

But good news came this week - Deborah and Steve may be accepted into a new facility in Rancho Cordova.

(Sound of Rancho Cordova Center... "Hi Steven!")

Deborah and Steve were greeted warmly as they walked into the new center. They were taken to a private room for medical assessments.

In the back offices, the feeling was stress. Rancho Cordova has been slammed by 35 new participants from Robertson - they already have 140 here daily. Center Administrator Judy Canterbury is also a nurse practitioner - so this week, she's doing physical assessments to help speed the intake process.

CANTERBURY: Right now our staff are really taking on this project, they really have a heart for it because they have been talking to the families. But we know that in the long run we're not going to continue at this pace.

Rancho Cordova has to hire more staff to deal with the influx - and fast. Workers have an increased caseload and an uncertain future. Centers may close as early as September 1st.

CANTERBURY: If we were to close our doors we would expect a lot of people going into emergency rooms, we know a number of them would go to nursing homes. If they can find beds. That's another issue. There might not be beds for those people. So in that case, families are probably off work losing their jobs, and you know, it's going to become a snowball affect for those families.

Meantime, the Heyns remain in transition.