

## Santa Maria Wisdom Center Trying to Stay Open

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SANTA MARIA - It's an exciting time of day at the Santa Maria Wisdom Center.

Staff and volunteers get the clients fired up with some dancing and shaking.

"We are the only adult day healthcare program in the whole area", says Wisdom Center Program Director Betsy Whitaker, "there's not another program like ours in the whole area so we try to extend our services as much as possible."



But the good times could be over for the Wisdom Center as early as December.

The non-profit group that runs the center has lost its primary source of funding, Medi-Cal, due to cutbacks amid the state financial crisis.

"We're also doing a lot of lobbying right now with our legislators", Whitaker says, "we're trying to get them to go back to Governor Brown and talk to him again about the importance of having these programs in our areas."

The Wisdom Center is a full-service facility that provides transportation and meals and as well as recreational, occupational, physical and healthcare services.

"It's a lot less expensive to keep us here and a lot better than us becoming shut-ins", says Wisdom Center client Kathy Boyd, "we get to play games, and exercise and socialize, we've got a physical and occupational therapist and we've got a gym we can work out in too, this place keeps me sharp to learn skills that will help me stay independent."

"If people are not coming here, they are going probably to an institution", Whitaker says, "if not today then in whatever time frame, most of them will go to nursing homes, we happen to be in a county that's also under-bedded for nursing homes, so its difficult to find placement for the people that might have to go to a nursing home."

Per client cost at the Santa Maria Wisdom Center is as much as two-thirds less than what it would cost to take care of the same person in a nursing home.

The Wisdom Center has until December to find a new source of funding or it'll be forced to close its doors and layoff all 28 of its staff.