

Seniors, health care workers protest gov's elimination of adult day care programs

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Silver Lake ADHC participants hold their signs protesting Governor Brown's decision to close their center.

Elderly Medi-Cal recipients and their caregivers rallied in downtown Los Angeles Monday, saying that the governor's elimination of a statewide day care program for the elderly threatens their continued independence and their health.

Several hundred health care workers, beneficiaries, and their friends and family members waved signs and chanted outside downtown L.A.'s Ronald Reagan State Building Monday in protest of the proposed shutdown of the [Adult Day Health Care \(ADHC\) centers](#) across California. State funding for the program is set to end on December 1, 2011.

"We're here today to let everybody know that if we don't try to save this program, these people will be out of services. Thirty-seven thousand elderly and disabled adults are going to be out of services come Dec. 1," said ADHC board member Salpy Boyajian. "They're going to be either institutionalized, hospitalized, nursing home-bound, or left to die in their homes."

The centers are an optional Medi-Cal benefit that offers health care and supervision to mostly elderly and disabled residents of California.

"The main core service that we provide is the medical component," says Boyajian. "We have nurses in our facilities who do their daily nursing services. We have social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists - so they receive all of those on a daily basis, and they also receive two meals every day."

Boyajian says Monday's protests drew participants from around 80 ADHC centers from all around Southern California. There are about 300 ADHC centers throughout the state.

"We've done so many things – petitioned the government, called our assemblypeople, emailed them, faxed them, and since that nobody's listening," says Silver Lake ADHC Program Director Milla Coger. "So now we're going out so that physically they can see that we want our program to continue and they can see [how] our participants look – the ones who are seated, the ones on wheelchair[s]. These are the people we are serving, and why would you take that away from them?"

Coger says her mother introduced her to the program while she was alive.

"I could see how happy she was with her friends. How happy she was to be there, and how happy we were to serve them," says Coger. "But no more. She's gone, and so they are my parents now. They're my fathers; they're my mothers. And it's like everything I have I give to them because it's like I'm serving my parents."

Governor Brown cut funding for the Medi-Cal program as part of his administration's efforts to reduce the state's massive deficit. The closures should save California about \$178 million, according to the Calif. Department of Finance. At the time, he said he would create funding for a similar, though less costly program to take on many of the ADHC centers' principal functions. But he vetoed [a bill](#) that would have provided much of that funding.

In a [written response](#) on his decision, Brown stated that funding a similar program, titled "Keeping Adults Free from Institutions," would be "unnecessary and untimely:"

While my Administration deeply shares the goal of "Keeping Adults Free from Institutions," creating a new ADHC look-alike program at this juncture is unnecessary and untimely. It does not address the immediate need to transition ADHC beneficiaries to other home and community-based services that can meet their needs, and would cause confusion for both consumers and providers about when an ill-defined "KAFI" program would be available.

Protesters are awaiting a court hearing set for Nov. 8 and hoping the court will grant an injunction against ending the program while its closure is challenged in court.

KPCC's Eric Zassenhaus contributed to this report.]



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Harlod Padron holds a sign in support of the Adult Day Health Care centers. He has been a participant in the program for the last six months.



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Supporters of Adult Day Health Care rally outside of the Ronald Reagan State Building to protest Governor Brown's decision to close the centers in December.'



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A photograph showing the participants of the Silver Lake ADHC taking part in a community social event.



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Salpy Boyajian, ADHC Administrator and Board Member, speaks to the crowd outside the Ronald Reagan State Building downtown.