



## Seniors appeal to keep adult day-care intact

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Several dozen frail or disabled seniors using canes, walkers and wheelchairs delivered a Valentine's Day message to their legislators on Monday, asking that they not break their hearts.

The seniors want lawmakers to hold off proposed budget cuts they say would end publicly funded adult day-care services for some 37,000 Californians who rely on them at least once a month.

"If we lose the funding, it will mean that most of these people will likely be institutionalized at an even greater expense to the taxpayers," said Adrian Sutrisno, administrator for Golden Acres Adult Day Health Care Center in North Hollywood.

Two seniors cared for at Golden Acres - Richard Pacheco of Panorama City and Setiaty Djohan of Granada Hills - are the faces for all those served by the state's 309 adult day-care centers, Sutrisno said.

Pacheco, in his late 30s, resides at a home for the developmentally disabled. Djohan, 92, lives with her daughter, who works during the day.

"We are able to care for them during the day, to monitor their health and provide for their needs," said Marie Tagdulang, the program director at Golden Acres, which serves up to 75 seniors a day. "If there's an immediate medical need, we contact their doctors."

The loss of the state funding, say advocates for the seniors, would throw the day care for those seniors into chaos, as it would the lives of their families who are able to leave their loved ones in the care of medical professionals while working.

"Our day care programs also allow seniors to remain in their communities," said Haykui Benyam, program director of the Sunshine Day Care Center in Van Nuys. "They are able to be a part of their families every day.

"If they are institutionalized, that will change drastically."

But those adult day care services are now in danger as Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed budget seeks to reduce the state's \$28 billion deficit.

Brown's budget would save \$500 million by cutting programs for low-income seniors and disabled people and severely limiting benefits to Medi-Cal recipients.

The hardest-hit county would be Los Angeles, which served 34,246 senior visits in fiscal 2009.

Advocates for these seniors are asking their legislators to reject the proposed cuts much as they have over the past three years when former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger made similar recommendations.

On Monday, many of those who attended a small rally in front of the state office building in Van Nuys visited the offices of Assemblyman Bob Blumenfield and state Sen. Alex Padilla. They delivered red hearts cut from construction paper as well as posters asking for their help.

Both Blumenfield and Padilla were in Sacramento, but aides for both lawmakers accepted the gifts and assured the seniors that their bosses remain supportive of retaining those programs.