



State budget cuts force disabled center shutdown

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SACRAMENTO, CA - Gov. Brown's efforts to close the state [budget](#) gap is being blamed for the shutdown of the Robertson Adult Day Health Center.

The Sacramento facility closed Friday after 26 years of caring for medically fragile clients, who come to the center for physical therapy,

socialization and arts and crafts.

Owner Jim MacDonald said state budget cuts left him no other choice.

"The bottom line is we don't have the funds to sustain this level of activity," MacDonald declared. "I would love to do it."

MacDonald explained that state lawmakers and Brown agreed to eliminate Medi-Cal [funding](#) for adult day health care centers in March.

Since then, the legislature hasn't approved budget measures and other bills that would appropriate \$25 million until centers receive federal funding.

With Robertson closed, 110 developmentally disabled clients will have to find somewhere else to go.

MacDonald said some will end up in much more expensive programs or be institutionalized instead of staying at home.

That's a concern for Jeffrey Chapman's parents. When he arrived at the center in 1986, his [mother](#) said he had just come out of a coma.

"The people here have been wonderful to Jeffrey. He's learned how to talk, become more mobile and more social," Helen Chapman explained. She teared up as she continued, "he enjoys coming here. I don't know what he's going to do. I don't know what we're going to do. I just hope we can manage to take care of him okay."

Art teacher Amy Altstatt started teaching at the center a month ago. She's among 25 staff members facing unemployment.

"It's really, really hard to say goodbye. I'm going to miss the people here," Altstatt said. "And it's going to be really hard for me considering my [car](#) just went out. My husband is in school and works part-time. So I do this and another job."

Workers and clients said they feel like the state is breaking up a close-knit [family](#).

Sheryl Flaherty has been a client at the center for a year.

"Why don't you keep it open?" Flaherty wants to ask Brown. "We have a lot of disabled people in wheelchairs and we need a place to go."

Executive Director of the California Association for Adult Day Services Lydia Missaelides said the Robertson center is among 300 facilities that receive state funding for adult day health care.

Missaelides said she expects seven other centers to shut down and more will probably follow.

"Sadly, in attempting to balance the state budget, California has gone morally bankrupt," Missaelides said.

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