

## Settlement brings new adult health services program for Shasta County; current patients should qualify

By [Alayna Shulman](#)

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Though a state proposal to shutter services caused a scare for Shasta County's only Adult Day Health Care program earlier this year, a settlement reached last week will likely allow all of the area's current participants to continue to get care through a similar program.

The Adult Day Health Care program, offered locally by Catholic Healthcare West's Golden Umbrella in Redding, lets people 18 and older with disabilities meet up to five times a week for health services such as physical and occupational therapy, as well as to socialize.

The program, which has around 35,000 participants statewide, is meant to keep people with disabilities from entering nursing facilities.

Gov. Jerry Brown proposed to eliminate the program as a MediCal benefit starting Dec. 1, meaning nearly all of the local program's 58 participants would have had to start paying for it or the program could have shut down altogether.

But a lawsuit settled Nov. 17 between attorneys representing Adult Day Health Care clients and the California Department of Health Care Services assured a new program called Community-Based Adult Services will start on March 1. Kay Hudelson, the local program's directors, estimated all of her clients would likely still qualify for it.

"A lot of our seniors were just in despair that we were going to go away December 1. It's very good news," she said. "It's keeping our doors open, and our seniors will still be able to receive the kind of services we provide."

Hudelson said it's not yet clear what the new program will look like, but it will offer essentially the same services as Adult Day Health Care.

Eligibility is determined by medical need. The California Department of Health Care Services estimated only 50 percent of participants statewide would qualify for the new program, but Hudelson said her clients are already extremely frail, so all of them should still qualify.

There's no limit or enrollment cap for the new program.

On Wednesday, Betty Barraza, 79, and her fellow participants at Golden Umbrella's program celebrated Thanksgiving early.

Barraza said she's relieved the program she comes to three times a week should stay intact.

She leads a Bible study and even goes to lunch throughout the week with the people she's met through the program.

Since news broke about the settlement, the mood at Golden Umbrella's program has been noticeably lifted, she said.

"They're happier," she said over a slice of "diabetic apple pie." "They don't act like they're worried as much now."

Barraza, who lives in Happy Valley with her sister, said the program is especially important for her friends who live alone.

"A lot of them don't have anywhere else to go," she said. "I guess you could stay home, but what else is there? Four walls? A television? I'm glad they're here, and so are they."

Around 23 providers statewide already have shut their doors in anticipation of the state's proposed cuts, the California Disability Community Action Network reported.

That could have happened in Redding, too, where Golden Umbrella's program had nearly 80 people in June.

"Our numbers have dropped because of this fear, I believe. The families have ended up placing them because they were afraid December 1 was the drop dead date," she said. "We're still here. That's my favorite saying now. I'm so excited for the seniors."