

State program for disabled adults to be axed

By Bethania Palma Markus, Staff Writer
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Disabled adults relax after lunch at Christ the King adult health care center in Walnut. The center could close down for lack of funding. (SGVN/Staff photo by Watchara Phomicinda)

WALNUT - Lilia Carballo, 29, has cerebral palsy and has been going daily to Christ the King Adult Day Health Care, where she learned to feed herself four years ago.

Every day she participates in activities, gets meals and is cared for along with about 150 other developmentally disabled adults and seniors who cannot care for themselves.

Her mother said the program has improved Lilia's quality of life.

But that could end soon for the nearly 27,000 disabled adults served by a state program.

The budget crisis will mean things are going to change for developmentally disabled adults like Carballo and frail elderly people who use the service through Medi-Cal.

As part of Gov. Jerry Brown's effort to close a \$26.6 billion budget deficit, the adult day health care (ADHC) program will be eliminated as a Medi-Cal optional benefit, officials said. Facilities like Christ the King may close because most of their patients use Medi-Cal.

Photo Gallery

Christ the King Adult Day Health Care faces closure



Lilia Carballo, 29, gets excited as she spends time with her mom, Yolanda Carballo, at Christ the King adult health care center in Walnut on Thursday, March 3, 2011. The center could close down for lack of funding. (SGVN/Staff photo by Watchara Phomicinda)

"If they close down the center my daughter won't have anywhere to go," said Lilia's mother, Yolanda Carballo. "Those four hours (she spends there daily) are so much for her - they give her physical therapy, speech therapy, they do one-on-one activities, they do everything."

The center even provides transportation to and from the facility, she said.

Sen. Bob Huff, R-Walnut, said in an ideal situation the Medi-Cal program wouldn't be eliminated.

"We're supporting the governor, as painful as it is, because there's just not a whole lot of good choices out there," Huff said. "We don't have any other revenues to backfill that; we don't want to go up on taxes."

It's still unclear what the program's replacement will look like, but the Medi-Cal option will end in June, officials said.

The program costs \$370 million annually in state and matching federal dollars, which comes to about \$14,000 for each person in adult day care.

The revised program will come from a different funding source and cost \$90 million and will likely reduce services to the same number of people or drop some clients, officials said.

"What's going to happen to (our clients)? Who is going to take care of them if we're gone?" asked Aileen Dalnay, program director at Christ the King. "The parents of these disabled individuals or the children of these seniors will have to stay home and take care of them. It will trickle down to everyone."

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