

August 2004

# Families & Friends OF LONG-TERM CARE

# Bulletin

*A community-relations newsletter published by  
the California Association of Health Facilities*

## 'It's a privilege' – Chula Vista Veterans Home takes on history project

Recording and preserving the stories of America's military veterans has always been a labor of love at the Veterans Home of California in Chula Vista.

And since the Library of Congress announced its Veterans History Project – inviting people from all walks of life to become amateur historians – the Chula Vista facility is on a roll.

"I love history," said Dan Murray, administrator at the 400-bed Veterans Home. "This is a mission here that has been really easy to accept. It's a privilege to work here and honor the people who saved the world."

Murray said groups of graduate students from the University of California at Santa Barbara and UC San Diego, equipped with video cameras, have been interviewing veterans for the last several years – "getting down what foxhole they were in or what airplane they flew in" – and making a solid contribution to the Veterans History Project.

"I think it's been very well done. Some of the vets here have really got with the program," Murray said.

As featured in the July *Families & Friends Bulletin*, the Veterans History Project attempts to get down on tape and paper the stories of ordinary people who served the military.

With 202 World War II veterans and 80 veterans of Korea, along with Vietnam vets, one as young as 51,

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A Marine stands guard with a carbine while other Marines hoist the first small U.S. flag on an improvised flagpole atop Mount Suribachi during the hard-fought Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. The picture – with decades-old marks from an editor's grease pencil still visible – is one of many photos, tapes and other memorabilia being collected in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress, February 1945

For more information about the Veterans History Project, phone toll free to (888) 371-5848 or go online to the Library of Congress Web site at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov). The full Internet address is <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets>.

Feel free to contact Jack Rye at CAHF at (800) 776-3346, ext. 116, [jrye@cahf.org](mailto:jrye@cahf.org), with your comments and questions.

## No cut for Medi-Cal long-term care funding in new state budget

After the usual delays for political negotiating, California has a new 2004-05 state budget – and Medi-Cal funding for long-term care has come through the process relatively unscathed.

Every year, health-care providers inevitably are concerned that lawmakers might try to reduce the state's fiscal deficit by cutting Medi-Cal services to California's elderly, disabled and poor.

But between now and July 2005, there is to be no reduction in the basic reimbursement rate for Medi-Cal services at skilled-nursing facilities and at the small group homes which care for people with developmental disabilities.

That's important because about two-thirds of nursing-facility residents and virtually all clients at developmental-services group homes depend on Medi-Cal to pay for their care.

But the Medi-Cal budget news is not all good. Although rates have not been cut for nursing facilities and developmental-services group homes (known among health-care providers as ICFs/DD, or intermediate-care facilities for people with developmental disabilities), payments are being reduced for many other areas of the Medi-Cal program.

Moreover, about \$94 million in combined state and

federal funding which providers hoped would be earmarked for caregiver pay raises in Medi-Cal facilities was cut from the new budget.

CAHF, the California Association of Health Facilities, continues to work with state officials to gain the maximum funding possible for Medi-Cal recipients in nursing facilities and ICFs/DD.

In recent months, CAHF and other stakeholders have taken part in a large-scale effort to overhaul California's Medi-Cal program (called Medicaid in other states). Our hope is that the redesigned Medi-Cal system will deliver the maximum services to the people who need them most.

Delay in passage of California's annual state budget has become almost a tradition, and the Legislature and governor seldom have a new budget in place by the start of the fiscal year every July.

In past years, this has been a major problem for nursing facilities and other Medi-Cal providers, which faced an abrupt cutoff of funding whenever the budget was late.

But that concern has been eased since 1998, when a CAHF-sponsored bill passed the Legislature ensuring that Medi-Cal payments continue in the event of a late state budget.

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the Chula Vista Veterans Home has plenty of historical resources.

And it's not just soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. Murray said interviews with the veterans include former Coast Guard and merchant marine personnel, as well as women nurses and WASPS, women pilots who flew military aircraft from the United States to airbases in Britain and the Pacific in World War II.

The project is not aimed exclusively at men and women who served in uniform but also U.S. civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts as war industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers and more.

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### 'These people are living history.'

– Veterans Home Administrator Dan Murray

Families & Friends of Long-Term Care are in an excellent position to help with the Veterans History Project, which relies on volunteers to interview, record, compile and donate materials.

The Library of Congress offers a Veterans History Project field kit with guidelines, checklists and tips for interviewers.

"These people are living history," Murray said. "Get involved – it's fun."

# CAHF letter-writing campaign supports Medi-Cal bill

By the time you receive this *Families & Friends Bulletin*, the caregivers who are members of the California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF) will already have launched and carried out a quick, intense letter-writing campaign to state legislators in support of an innovative new bill to boost Medi-Cal.

Crafted with input from seniors groups, advocates for nursing-facility care and the state Department of Health Services, the measure coming before the Legislature – Assembly Bill 1629 – would increase the amount Medi-Cal pays for long-term care by about 5.7 percent to reflect rising costs.

Even more important, AB 1629 calls for Medi-Cal long-term care payments to be made on a facility-specific basis. This is a departure from the traditional method of Medi-Cal payments, which is based on a flat rate. Under AB 1629, Medi-Cal payments would take into account varying expenses that affect individual nursing facilities.

In the vital area of care planning, the new bill would help residents express their desire to return home – and would help establish whether family members are available to provide home care. Nursing facilities would be required to provide information about community services

“These are important issues, and we felt the best way to convince lawmakers to support AB 1629 was to launch a grassroots letter-writing campaign,” said Kelley Queale, CAHF director of communications. “And we had to move fast because the legislative session is scheduled to end Aug. 31.”

CAHF promoted AB 1629 with a press conference and video press release on Aug. 11. CAHF also sent an e-mail to all Families & Friends members who have given us e-mail addresses, inviting them to write letters to their legislators supporting the bill.

“The public is coming to realize the importance of Medi-Cal long-term care to a healthy California, and nobody understands this better than the families and friends of long-term care residents and clients,” Queale said.

AB 1629 came into prominence early in August when state officials announced a much-anticipated overhaul of the Medi-Cal system has been put on hold until January.

CAHF will continue to work with the state and other provider groups to make the Medi-Cal “redesign” as effective as possible. Meanwhile, CAHF believes AB 1629 will bring needed relief to Medi-Cal health-care providers whose operating budgets are paper thin.

## *Send us your ideas for Families & Friends classes*

What can CAHF’s Families & Friends program to do for you in the area of consumer information?

As the number of Families & Friends grows, we here at the California Association of Health Facilities feel an increasing obligation to provide educational opportunities for the community.

Do you have questions about Medicare or Medi-Cal, about advance directives or long-term care insurance – or any of the other issues that face health-consumers?

If there is a topic you would like to see presented in a one- or two-hour educational seminar in your community, please tell us.

E-mail [jrye@cahf.org](mailto:jrye@cahf.org), phone (800) 776-3346, ext. 116, or write to Jack C. Rye, CAHF, P.O. Box 537004, Sacramento, CA 95853-7004. We’d love to hear from you.

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online at  
[www.cahf.org](http://www.cahf.org)

## **Families & Friends respond favorably to e-mail**

**L**ast month we asked readers of the *Families & Friends Bulletin* if they would be interested in receiving the newsletter in an e-mail version.

To our delight, your response has been favorable, and in the months to come we expect to be e-mailing many of you easily printed plain-text versions of the same articles and useful contacts that appear in every edition, along with a link to CAHF's Internet Web site for online viewing of the newsletter exactly as it appears in hard copy.

With the rapid growth this year of the Families &

Friends program – now more than 5,000 people strong – e-mail is a convenient way for us to keep down the time spent printing, labeling and mailing the newsletter.

For readers it means getting the *Families & Friends Bulletin* almost instantly, with no waiting for conventional mail.

If the idea of an e-mail *Families & Friends Bulletin* appeals to you, please contact Debbie Ross at CAHF at [dross@cahf.org](mailto:dross@cahf.org).