

UPTE-CWA 9119 Resolution Opposing closure of Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco

Whereas UPTE has become aware of a recent report by the San Francisco Gray Panthers that the San Francisco Department of Public Health has been carrying out dangerous discharges of frail Laguna Honda Hospital residents, most of whom need Skilled Nursing Care and are very vulnerable to medically-recognized transfer trauma, to shelters and out-of-county nursing facilities, including ones owned by Brius, notorious for its bad care, and had planned to transfer over 600 residents, and

Whereas of some 56 residents transferred, at least five have died within days of being transferred,

Whereas, despite SFDPH's insistence that the transfers are voluntary, many residents have not been told of their appeal rights, have been pressured to leave, and told that if they won their appeals to remain at LHH they might have to pay for their own care, and

Whereas, despite SFDPH's insistence that they can safely transfer over 600 residents, most residents would have to be transferred hundreds of miles away, given the extreme shortage of facilities willing to take Medi-Cal residents, and gentrification providing an incentive to buy up board and care homes and convert them to luxury housing.

Whereas involvement of the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid was because of dangerous conditions at LHH resulting from the "Flow Project," by which mentally ill and substance-using patients were taken out of SF General as soon as their Medi-Cal funding ran out, and placed in LHH, which had neither staff, equipment, or physical setup to safely care for them, and over LHH clinicians' objections. This situation was the direct result of SFDPH failing to provide adequate inpatient and outpatient treatment for people suffering from mental illness and substance use.

Whereas LHH is at risk of losing 120 beds by San Francisco not appealing a CMS covid-related ruling that residents' room have two beds or less; LHH was constructed only 15 years ago, has large rooms, and had extremely low covid infection rates throughout the pandemic.

Whereas San Francisco has an unusually high proportion of elder people living alone, many of whom are particularly poor, and Medi-Cal-accepting nursing homes and SNFs are very rare, so the threatened closure of Laguna Honda Hospital would be a disaster.

Be it resolved that UPTE, as a healthcare and education sector union, supports public health services especially for the most vulnerable of our society and supports the SF Gray Panthers in their demands that:

- Laguna Honda be open to all San Franciscans who need nursing home care
- SFDPH Stop the "flow" project & return admission decisions to LHH Staff
- No forced closures

- No discharges for Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) eligible residents
- No discharges for non-SNF eligible residents until safe and local arrangements are made.
- No loss of beds in this nearly new facility
- Funding for existing residents must continue until recertification
- Sufficient programs specifically for persons with disabilities who are also mentally ill and/or substance using must be made available immediately ---to allow them to remain in the community and so inappropriate nursing home admissions will be prevented.

https://graypantherssf.igc.org/about_us.htm