



UNION OF AMERICAN PHYSICIANS & DENTISTS

Affiliated with AFSCME, AFL-CIO

180 GRAND AVENUE, SUITE 1380 • OAKLAND, CA 94612-3741
PHONE (510) 839-0193 • FAX: (510) 763-8756 • toll free: (800) 622-0909
E-MAIL: uapd@uapd.com • WEBSITE: www.uapd.com



STUART A. BUSSEY, MD.,JD
president
RONALD A. BORTMAN, MD.
vice president
ALLEN R. DORAN, MD.
vice president
DEBORAH E. BROWN, MD.
secretary
PETER A. STATTI, MD.
treasurer

For Immediate Release

Thursday, May 28, 2009

Contact: Sue Wilson, 510-926-0408 (cell), 510-510-839-0193 (office), swilson@uapd.com

California Department of Veterans Affairs Slashes Medical Care for Napa Valley Vets **UAPD Protests Physician Layoffs and Planned Unit Closure at Yountville Veterans' Home**

Staff and residents of the Yountville Veterans' Home, administered by the California Department of Veterans' Affairs (CDVA), were given word just before the Memorial Day holiday that CDVA plans to close the acute care unit (1-South) of the home's Holderman Hospital. CDVA put its plan in motion by issuing layoff notices for half of the home's Medical Staff last week. If allowed to proceed, the layoffs and unit closure would severely compromise the quality of medical care given to the 1,100 veterans who reside at the home, according to representatives of the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD), which represents the physicians and dentists that provide patient care there. Moreover, according to UAPD, the short-term savings generated by these cuts would be dwarfed by the long-term costs associated with providing the veterans' medical care in area private hospitals.

Eight UAPD-represented doctors employed by the Veterans' Home were sent layoff notices last week, in addition to several physician-managers, a number much larger than what state-mandated budget cuts require. The layoff notices followed a proposal last month by the local Strategic Planning Committee to close 1-South, which the Governing Body, which includes the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, later approved. Yountville Veterans' Home Administrator Marcella McCormack has cited the need to save on staff costs as the primary motivation for the closing of 1-South.

"The CDVA is using the budget cuts as an excuse to close down this acute care unit and cut other medical services, which it has wanted to do for a long time," states UAPD President Stuart Bussey, MD, JD. "But this is one of the largest groups of veterans in the country, and they need the care that this unit and these physicians provide. Providing that care on-site is actually much more affordable." By going forward with the large number of physician layoffs, UAPD asserts, the CDVA is doing a de-facto unit closure without following proper procedures or allowing community involvement. UAPD is encouraging citizens to contact their local state legislators to voice their concern about the CDVA's decision.

UAPD estimates that closing 1-South and laying off physicians will cost the State about \$11 million in lost reimbursement revenue each year, compared to a savings of about \$4 million in staff time. The Veterans' Home will also incur the costs of treating the residents at area hospitals, as well as the costs of transporting them back and forth to outside facilities.

Physicians worry that veterans who are accustomed to receiving medical care at the home will not be able to maintain the same treatment plans if required to travel, resulting in more serious complications. In emergency situations, particularly on nights and weekends, the cuts would cause a dramatic rise in response times and decline of care.

CDVA administrators made no mention of the cuts at the Memorial Day festivities hosted at the Veterans' Home.

Founded in 1884, the Yountville Veterans' Home is the largest state-run veterans' home in the country, and houses the nation's largest group of World War II veterans, many of whom require advanced medical care.