

Frequently Asked Questions regarding Burlingame Long Term Care Center

For Long-Term Care Staff and Providers

Why are you recommending that we not renew the lease at BLTC?

- The BLTC building is very old and no longer supports the quality of care that is now the standard. Faced with the decision on whether to renew the lease, the Health System sought an outside expert, who did an extensive review of the state of building and BLTC operations. The expert concluded that staff and providers were delivering the best care possible working in an aging building with many limitations, such as not meeting hospital seismic requirements, limited access to outdoors, small, crowded rooms with inadequate privacy, and many other physical issues. His recommendation was to not renew the lease.
- We are paying nearly \$2 million each year for the BLTC lease, plus \$1 million each year in repairs, maintenance and utilities. If we renew the lease, the rent payments will go up by 5% each year, even as the building gets older and more out-of-date.
- On top of the building problems, the rate the State pays for nursing care provided by hospitals was reduced dramatically by 23%, effective November 1, 2011. While a court has put a temporary halt on the rate reduction, we have to decide now whether or not to renew the lease as the legal challenge to the rate reduction may take years to resolve. We cannot bet on the rate reduction not coming through with a new, five year lease.
- With these reduced rates, we will lose \$4.5 million on nursing care in the current fiscal year, and \$9 million thereafter. If we renew the lease at BLTC, the loss will continue to increase due to rent increases, salary and benefit cost increases, and increasing costs for maintenance and repair.

Why can't we just make repairs to BLTC and keep it open?

- The problems with the building are beyond our ability to fix as they are about the way the building was built. For example, there is no way to provide access to safe, secure, inviting outdoor space, and it is not possible to improve sufficiently the entry and exit ways.

How many staff members will be affected?

- If the Board of Supervisors accepts the recommendation, we will retain approximately 75 staff members for skilled nursing care; 200 filled positions would be eliminated through attrition, placement in other county positions, and layoffs.

What will happen to my position and when will I know?

- As soon as the Board of Supervisors decides whether to accept our recommendation, we will be working with Human Resources to determine seniority rights for employees. Within 45 days of the Board of Supervisors' decision, we will notify staff members of their status.

What happens if I get laid off?

- If you are a permanent employee and you are laid off, you will receive payment for all your unused vacation hours, 50% of the value of your unused sick leave hours, and a

severance payment depending on the specific terms of your MOU (assuming you meet all the requirements in the MOU). In addition, you may be entitled to up to six months of health coverage. To find out those specific provisions, review your MOU at www.smcgov.org/hr/mous. We will provide you with more details and a specific HR person to work with if your position is at risk.

What will happen to our residents?

- We will not exit BLTC until every resident is safely placed.
- As soon as the Board of Supervisors decides whether to accept the recommendation, we will be assessing each resident to determine what level of care is appropriate for that resident. We will then find an appropriate placement for that resident. We will do our very best to find placements for residents in San Mateo County. If we cannot do that, we will find placements as close to home as possible.

What should I say to a resident who asks me about this?

- Explain that we will continue to provide great care at BLTC until the very last resident is placed. A team of professionals will work on each transition to ensure that the resident goes to a safe place and the transfer goes smoothly. There will be SMMC administrative staff available at BLTC each week to answer questions.

What should I do if one of the residents is really upset about this?

- Reassure the resident that their rights will be respected. Find out what the concerns are and document them so the transition team can address them. Communicate with the doctor, nurse or social worker for that resident and explore a psychological consult if needed. Contact the Ombudsman and/or the Resident Council for additional support if needed.

Doesn't the County have enough money to keep BLTC open?

- The County has significant budget problems. Many departments are getting cut by the state and have had to make reductions for a number of years. These are very difficult financial times for all local governments, including San Mateo County.

I heard it will cost a lot of money to exit BLTC. Why don't you just spend that money to keep it open?

- We estimate that it will cost \$9 million in one-time costs to exit BLTC. The majority of this is severance and other costs for staff whose positions will be affected. The other big expense is paying for transportation and other costs for residents to move to new placements. These are one-time costs that we have to pay regardless of when we exit BLTC.

When will the final decision be made?

- The Board of Supervisors will consider the recommendation as part of a budget workshop on January 31, and likely will make the final decision at the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 14.

How soon will BLTC close?

- If the Board of Supervisors accepts the recommendation, we will keep operating BLTC until every resident has been placed in a safe new home. Our plan is to have this done no later than June 30, 2013 when the lease for BLTC ends.

Will BLTC be operated by another nursing home operator?

- That is up to the owner of the building to decide.

I heard that a court temporarily stopped the Medi-Cal rate reduction for nursing homes like ours? Why are you still recommending that we not renew the lease?

- We would recommend exiting BLTC regardless of the rate reduction due to the condition of the building.
- While a court has put a temporary halt on the rate reduction, we have to decide now whether or not to renew the lease. The legal challenge could take years to resolve; we cannot bet a new lease on that happening. And if we do not renew the lease, we need to have time to make sure the transition is safe and smooth for all the residents and affected staff members.

June 2013 is a long ways away, why can't we wait to make this decision?

- If the Board of Supervisors accepts the recommendation not to renew the lease, we need to have as much time as possible to ensure a safe, smooth transition for BLTC residents and staff members.