

The Jacob Journal

A NEWSLETTER FROM SUPERVISOR DIANNE JACOB

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1999

Working for Seniors - Today, Tomorrow, and into the Millennium



Statistics can tell a troubling story. And, when it comes to population projections, the figures are more than just numbers - they represent real lives. So it's pretty overwhelming when statistics show that the elderly population is increasing at nearly twice the rate of the general population. In fact, by the year 2010, San Diego County's 60+ population is expected to increase nearly 70% and the 75+ population is expected to increase 80% from present levels.

Of course, the trick for being prepared for these changes is to start planning now. Recognizing the need to better address the myriad issues likely to arise as a result of the increasing elderly population, the Board of Supervisors has done just that!

In May of last year, Supervisor Pam Slater and I hosted the Aging Summit. The primary purpose of the Aging Summit was to develop an action plan to meet the needs of the County's growing aging population for today and into the future. Attended by more than 200 people, the Summit included interested citizens as well as representatives from private, non-profit and for profit agencies serving the elderly and disabled, managed care organizations, hospitals and medical facilities, senior advocacy organizations, universities and other educational research institutions, religious and civic organizations, and County

staff. Also in May, the Board of Supervisors hosted an Elder Abuse Conference which focused on ways to prevent exploitation of our senior citizens.

But Summits and Conferences which identify the problem are not all that's needed. Our current efforts geared to seniors must be amplified with action. That's why just last month, I introduced two new proposals aimed at preparing for the future. Both were approved unanimously by the Board of Supervisors on December 15, 1998. Here's a brief look...

STOP HMO ELDER DUMPING - NOW!

On November 2, 1998, HMO's throughout the country began notifying Medicare clients that they would be dropped from their health plan, effective December 31, 1998. The numbers are alarming. To date, more than 400,000 Medicare beneficiaries nation-wide have been dropped by their HMO. With approximately 330,000 Medicare clients in San Diego County alone, it is crucial that this region be armed with a plan should "elder dumping" occur in San Diego County.

To date, approximately 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries have been dropped in San Diego County by Prudential and United Healthcare. Fortunately, San Diego's largest HMO's continue to care for the elderly population and report that they have no plans to drop any beneficiaries unless the market changes drastically. But relying on unpredictable market forces is not the peace-of-mind most of us seek when we plan for our healthcare needs or those of our parents and grandparents.

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That's why the Board of Supervisors approved my proposal to put an elder dumping prevention plan in place now. We have set a precedent for leadership to assure that this County's senior and disabled Medicare beneficiaries will be cared for today and into the future, despite changes in the healthcare market.

"GUARDIAN ANGELS" FOR SENIORS

But healthcare is not the only issue facing the County's growing senior population. In fact, according to a recent survey, over 70% of San Diego County respondents feel that a lack of recreational or social activities for the elderly population is a critical issue. Moreover, 90% are concerned with elder abuse and a resounding 96% feel that loneliness is a critical problem.

The unfortunate truth is that many elderly people - many of whom are nursing home residents - have no one to turn to. They have no family, no friends, and no distant relatives who can visit or watch over them. Further, their social isolation may be coupled with numerous problems in the nation's nursing homes as were recently revealed by state and federal investigations. While most provide excellent care, some nursing home operators take advantage of the frailty and isolation of those who live there.

Clearly, nursing home residents with regular visitors monitoring their condition are likely to receive a better quality of care. And there are plenty of citizens who would be willing to volunteer their time to serve this senior citizen population. In fact, studies also reveal that over 90% of the general population view volunteer activities as an important part of life. And, over 90% want to be involved in volunteer activities as they get older.

With this in mind, the time has come to begin to pro-actively address these critical issues through a

volunteer "Guardian Angel" program. The concept of this proposal, which Supervisor Slater and I introduced jointly, is simple: link caring volunteer community members with nursing home residents who are in need of companionship. This is a win for all involved. Not only will both people gain a friend and confidant, but the nursing home resident will have a "Guardian Angel" to be their advocate in times of need.

Clearly, these are just two of many actions necessary today to meet the needs of tomorrow's seniors. As we plan for our own futures, as well as those of our parents and grandparents, we must remain focused on more than just the bottom line. As in the past, I will continue to work to balance a sound financial approach with the highest quality-of-life possible for all of our futures - today, tomorrow and into the new millennium.

Upcoming Community Coffees with Dianne Jacob

January 28, 1999

The Bread Basket
1347 Tavern Road, Alpine
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

February 11, 1999

Howard's Bakery
1097 Broadway, El Cajon
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

February 25, 1999

Singing Hills Resort, Goucho Room
3007 Dehesa Road, El Cajon
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Join me for coffee & conversation - No need to RSVP.
Just bring your questions, comments and concerns.

It's my job to make
County government work for YOU!

JACOB PROPOSES SCANNER ORDINANCE

New Law Will Require Registration, Inspection of all Price Scanners

At the request of Second District Supervisor Dianne Jacob, the County Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed an annual inspection program for price scanners found in supermarkets and other retail businesses.

Recent surveys conducted by both state and County officials show that the problem of inaccurate scanners is on the increase. In a test conducted within the past year, inspectors with the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures found that of 375 items tested, 8.2 % resulted in overcharges, and 3.3 % were undercharged.

"Right now, there is no statewide system to insure the accuracy of price scanners," said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who proposed the ordinance for consideration by the Board. "This measure will protect consumers from being overcharged, and save businesses the costs of undercharges."

Under Jacob's proposal, businesses would be charged a sliding fee each year based on the number of scanners they operate, with a maximum fee of \$75 per year. Businesses of less than 3,500 square feet that already have measuring devices registered with the County would be exempt from the new fee. Some 6,200 businesses would be affected by the proposed ordinance, and the average annual fee would be \$39. The funds raised by the licensing fee would pay for staff to conduct annual inspections of all price scanners in use in San Diego County.

Supervisor Dianne Jacob proudly serves
the communities of:

Agua Caliente Springs ♦ Allied Gardens ♦ Alpine ♦ Bankhead Springs ♦ Barrett ♦
Blossom Valley ♦ Bostonia ♦ Boulevard ♦ Campo ♦ Canebrake ♦ Casa de Oro ♦
Crest ♦ Cuyamaca ♦ Dehesa ♦ Del Cerro ♦ Descanso ♦ Dulzura ♦ El Cajon ♦
Eucalyptus Hills ♦ Fernbrook ♦ Flinn Springs ♦ Granite Hills ♦ Guatay ♦ Harbison
Canyon ♦ Jacumba ♦ Jamul ♦ Julian ♦ La Mesa ♦ Lake Morena ♦ Lakeside ♦
Lemon Grove ♦ Mt. Laguna ♦ Mt. Helix ♦ Pine Hills ♦ Pine Valley ♦ Potrero ♦
Poway ♦ Ramona ♦ Rancho San Diego ♦ Rolando ♦ San Carlos ♦ Santa Ysabel ♦
Santee ♦ Shelter Valley ♦ Spring Valley ♦ Tecate ♦ Tierra del Sol ♦ Vallecitos

...and the Indian reservations of:

Barona ♦ Campo ♦ Cosmit ♦ Cuyapaipa ♦ Inaja ♦ Jamul ♦ La Posta ♦
Manzanita ♦ Mesa Grande ♦ Santa Ysabel ♦ Sycuan ♦ Viejas

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We hope to hear from you soon!

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