

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR: Friday, September 23, 2016

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Frontline Case Workers Demand Harbor Regional Center Management Put Care of Special Needs Patients First

Management Blocking Disbursement of \$1.8 Million Designated to Strengthen Frontline Services Hurts Harbor Area Residents with Special Needs and Developmental Disabilities

Torrance, CA—Workers on the front lines of patient care at the Harbor Regional Center in Torrance will hold a rally to demand that top management deliver on \$1.8 million for special needs services. The center already suffers from a high turnover rate, impacting the quality of care for special needs children and adults.

Who: SEIU Local 721 Frontline Workers at Harbor Regional Center

What: Rally to Demand Harbor Regional Center Management Put Care of Special Needs Patients First

When: Friday, September 23, 2016 at Noon

Where: Harbor Regional Center, 21211 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503

People with developmental disabilities scored a huge victory last year when the California State Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown passed AB X2-1, which increased funding for developmental disability services by over \$300 million. Stagnant wages and benefits have made it difficult to recruit and retain skilled workers at Regional Centers across the Golden State – prompting an unprecedented collaboration between frontline workers and Sacramento leaders to improve standards for Regional Center staff so that Californians with developmental disabilities can receive the best services possible.

But while the Regional Centers throughout California have spent those funds to improve care for some of California's most vulnerable residents, top management at the Harbor Regional Center continue to withhold the center's share. Frontline workers fear money will not be disbursed in a fair and transparent way, and instead will be used for the benefit of top management rather than securing and retaining frontline care professionals.

Retaining high quality, compassionate and culturally competent staff is key to improving patient care over the long term; in the past five years, the center has experienced a high turnover rate of frontline workers who deal directly with patients. ABx2-1 – authored by Assemblyman Tony Thurmond – was intended to help people with developmental disabilities receive the best Regional Center services possible. But at the Harbor Regional Center in Torrance, top management has held back the funding – negatively impacting the care of the very clients they are supposed to serve. We will demand that they spend these funds for their intended purpose – to recruit and retain the best possible staff at the Harbor Regional Center and to provide the highest quality care possible for our special needs patients!

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Background: Numerous special needs and developmentally disabled clients receive critical care from the over 220 workers at the Harbor Regional Center – which serves children and adults from Artesia, Avalon, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Harbor City, Harbor Gateway, Hawaiian Gardens, Hermosa Beach, Lakewood, Lomita, Long Beach, Manhattan Beach, Norwalk, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, San Pedro, Signal Hill, Torrance and Wilmington.