



Dear members of the Board of Supervisors

My name is Susan Lindman RN, PHN. Geriatric Assessment Program (GAP) was one of 5 programs that I supervised as Program Manager of the PHD's Chronic Disease and Aging Programs from 2001 to 2005. I am asking that you reinstate and fund a Public Health Nurse position for a Geriatric Assessment Program.

Elimination of the Geriatric Assessment program has been detrimental to our community, has created a gap in the continuum of care for seniors and urgently needs to be addressed as the need will only increase.

This program was important to our community because:

- GAP served people who were not eligible for services from other community agencies. The program provided information, referral, consultation, in-home assessments, care planning, short-term case management, senior advocacy and senior and community education.
- GAP was not tied to restrictive policies and procedures but was able to pull together resources from many community agencies that had not been able to help the senior due to lack of finances, were outside of the agency's protocol ( i.e. they senior had to request help) or lack of follow through by the senior.
- The focus was on the frail, dependent adult at risk of institutionalization due to significant medical, psychological, social or financial problems. This program helped the senior with limited income who was often not eligible for other community services and they did not qualify for MediCal nor did they have sufficient funds to pay for services.
- Many times the senior did not obtain needed services as the result of not knowing what services were available, inability to follow through with suggested interventions or not having mental capacity to request services. Often the referral for GAP came from a neighbor, a friend, another agency who was unable to help or an out of town relative that knew something was wrong but was unable to be there to help.
- The GAP PHN coordinated with the community as well as other public agencies to ensure the optimal level of functioning for this senior. Often times the referral was made before hospitalization was necessary and prevented a hospitalization.
- The GAP PHN held a unique position as she had a broad knowledge of community resources, knew how to tap into those resources, was respected by community agencies for her knowledge and ability to put together a plan to help the senior.

I believe that the seniors in Santa Barbara County would benefit greatly if this position is reinstated. Today we need resources that reduce the cost of hospitalization and institutionalization of our seniors.

Although there are programs that attempt to help the senior who has been hospitalized to avoid returning to the hospital, there is no program like the former GAP that can intervene early and often prevent more costly services.

This PHN was also competent to help the senior and his family find the best level of care if placement was necessary.

Susan & Nils Lindman  
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
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**DASH**  
**Doctors Assisting  
Seniors at Home**

June 13, 2016

My name is Jeanne M. West and I work with DASH (Doctors Assisting Seniors at Home), and I am an active member of the Adult and Aging Network. The Adult & Aging Network includes representatives from 30 public and private organizations and our role is to advocate for the needs of the elderly and disabled. Our rapidly aging population is growing and there is an increasing need for senior support services. We see this first-hand every day in the work we do at DASH.

The Network has been working hard over the last year to identify the most pressing unmet needs in our community. After conducting a thorough analysis of current service providers and local programs, we feel strongly that we **urgently** need an additional public health nurse position specifically to serve home-bound seniors who are ineligible for Medi-Cal and public assistance programs or who do not meet current program criteria.

Currently, there is no program or position like this in the County and, therefore, there is a sizeable senior population whose needs are unmet. A similar program previously existed under Public Health Department called the Geriatric Assessment Program or "GAP". This program was eliminated a number of years ago.

We first brought this need to your attention back in November during the presentation from the Adult & Aging Network. Since then, we have been working diligently to refine our proposal in time for your consideration during budget hearings.

At this time, we are recommending that public health department contract with a community based organization for this position to ensure the most efficient use of resources. **Investment in this public health nurse position will save the county costs in emergency and crisis services.**

I know first-hand from my work with seniors every day that we need additional resources to serve our most vulnerable, home-bound seniors, who have complex needs, are financially insecure and ineligible for current public programs

Thank you for considering this request from the Adult & Aging Network for a public health nurse position.

Sincerely,

Jeanne M. West, RN, MHA – Enrollment Coordinator

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