

St. Mary's Center

1) How has the current economy affected the need of services that you give to the community?

We live at a time second only to the Great Depression. More people need help as foreclosures, the cost of health care, loss of income and cuts to service impact more and more each day.

Initially, government cuts to programs and people looked to impact St. Mary's Center in ways difficult to imagine. Many of the program cuts have been averted. Unfortunately, cuts to SSI remain and their impact is having a drastic effect on 95% of the people served by St. Mary's Center.

Cuts to Services

- State of California eliminated statewide funding for EHAP (Emergency Housing Assistance Program) impacting our Winter Shelter. St. Mary's is fundraising to fill this funding gap of \$15,000 to ensure our shelter stays open.
- The City of Oakland eliminated senior set aside funding resulting in a cut of \$45,000 to Outreach and Advocacy. This program provides friendly visiting, grocery shopping and help with daily tasks to over 500 frail elders.
- State funding was eliminated for Mercy Brown Bag, a collaborative partner with St. Mary's Center. In Alameda County, funding was secured from other sources to avert this cut this year, though the program is jeopardized. The Brown Bag program provides groceries twice a month to 125 seniors at St. Mary's.
- A court order helped to avert the loss of In-Home Support Services for 3,200 people in Alameda County. For medically frail seniors, this help with bathing, medications, and light housework ensures their quality of life. 366 seniors at St. Mary's count on this specialized care.
- The proposed cuts to Adult Day Health Care have been delayed by court injunction. This therapeutic care setting is especially important for those suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementias. 192 St. Mary's seniors and their care givers use this critical program.

Cuts to Senior's Income

- Cuts to SSI have not been averted. 95% of the people served by St. Mary's Center will be affected. In the last 10 months, SSI—(Social Supplementary Income) has been cut \$62/month for individuals and \$172/month for couples. The State has permanently eliminated a Cost of Living Increase. Many wonder how they will survive with the cost of food, transportation, rent, and medications, increasing.
- Many seniors come to St. Mary's Center with no income. General Assistance Grants provide gap funding when applying for other benefits like SSI and pension funds. Additional Cuts in General Assistance:
 - those sharing housing will see a reduction of 15-25% unless living with a spouse or domestic partner

- GA recipients not covered by Med-Cal will have their grants reduced \$40 each month to cover the cost of medical care.
- Beginning January 1, 2010 employable individuals will receive GA for a maximum of 3 months in any 12 month period. This is being contested in a class action suit.