

RESOLUTION

RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, increasingly throughout California, but especially acute in Los Angeles County, board-and-care homes are disappearing even as hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to house homeless people; an April survey estimated that 39 such facilities had closed in the previous three years — eliminating 949 beds out of an estimated 6,100; and

WHEREAS, board-and-care homes which serve not only mentally ill people but thousands of seniors are struggling to stay open, as the state pays them only about half the rate that operators of homeless shelters receive; and

WHEREAS, these homes provide 24-hour staffing, serve three meals a day and administer medication, they are for seniors as well as for adults with debilitating mental illness who are unable to care for themselves; most residents are poor as well and, therefore, at high risk of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, reimbursement for the services board-and-care homes provide, which is based on state budget allotments and Social Security levels, is currently about \$35 a day per resident but that rate has fallen so far behind inflation that operators say it is barely enough to cover food and pay their staffs; and some are struggling to maintain aging buildings that are worth more as real estate than as a business; and

WHEREAS, the media has reported that the owners of several board-and-care homes are considering, or were in the process of, closing; most are long-term owners who have first-name relationships with their residents, some knowing each other for decades; these owners are barely breaking even, and they foresee going into the red when the minimum wage goes up in the city of Los Angeles next July yet at the same time they are not free to raise their prices, which are set by the state; and

WHEREAS, the California Community Care Licensing Division has advised that there are about 154 homes in Los Angeles County still open, with a total capacity of 5,129 beds and this is due to 39 closures over three years representing a 16% decline; and

WHEREAS, if residents cannot find a vacancy at another board-and-care, there is no assurance they will remain housed; some may be taken back by families, others may wind up in unlicensed homes, and many will land on the streets, in jail or in mental hospitals; and

WHEREAS, most beds serve those who cannot pay and for them, the reimbursement rate is \$1,058 per month — or about \$35 per day — per bed, which is comprised of the resident's Social Security disability payment and a state supplement for out-of-home care set by the annual budget process in Sacramento; and

WHEREAS, advocacy groups lobbied unsuccessfully this spring for an \$18-million boost to bring the reimbursement rate to at least \$2,000 per month; and

WHEREAS, the State of California should be urged to use any unspent mental health services funds to prevent board-and-care facilities from closing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 State Legislative Program SPONSORSHIP and SUPPORT for any legislation or administrative action which would increase the State payment rate for licensed board and care facilities which serve vulnerable communities, especially seniors with mental health issues.

PRESENTED BY:


NURY MARTINEZ
Councilwoman, 6th District

SECONDED BY:


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