

Cuts are hurting Yolo seniors

By Letters to the Editor

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The following is a copy of a letter to Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove:

The cuts to services for seniors in Yolo County as a result of the sequestration and the Older Americans Act not being renewed are substantial and affecting our most vulnerable seniors. Three community organizations that serve homebound, homeless and those unable to care for themselves are being particularly affected:

* Senior Link of Yolo County cut back the hours of its program to half-days. As a result, it will serve an estimated 75 people over a three-month contract, down from 225 in the previous years. Older adults and their caregivers will not be able to be linked to critical services like affordable housing, food resources, medical care, home care and Medicare counseling, particularly in the rural areas of the county.

* Yolo County Meals on Wheels is anticipating the need to cease home-delivered meals for those in the rural areas, and for the first time ever is poised to begin placing new seniors needing meals on a waiting list for food. In addition, the number of days per week for home-delivered meals will be decreased.

* Yolo Adult Day Health Center's Caregiver Support Program funding is being reduced by 8.5 percent. The funds pay for 28 hours per week of caregiver case management, including resource assistance, counseling and education. To align with reductions, the center will reduce the position to 20 hours per week despite the growing demand for CSP support in the community.

The Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance board of directors knows that you have a long history of support for seniors and those most at risk in our community. We urge you to take a strong leadership role in addressing the cruel cuts imposed by the sequestration and to help to move forward the renewal of the Older Americans Act.

When you are back in the district we would be happy to arrange a town hall meeting with local seniors so that you can hear directly about these and other senior issues in Yolo County.

Jim Provenza

Yolo County supervisor and chairman, Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance