



Press Release

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Solano and Napa Providers Brace for Elderly Population Boom

SAN FRANCISCO, October 11, 2005 – With the elderly population expected to increase 182% in Solano County and 99% in Napa County by 2030, regional systems of care for the elderly could be severely understaffed and overwhelmed. Action must be taken now to prepare for this projected population boom among 65-to 80-year-old residents, according to a report released today by United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) and the Solano Community Foundation.

The report, “The Coming Wave: Solano and Napa Counties Brace for Elderly Population Boom,” reveals that over the next 25 years, a number of factors, in addition to the elderly population boom, will place a major burden on the systems of care in Solano and Napa Counties. Key findings from “The Coming Wave” report include:

- **Uncertain financial futures** – In 2000, nearly one-third of residents age 45-64 in Solano and Napa Counties were living at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level, a commonly used measure of public assistance eligibility in California. With more than 13,800 Solano and 5,300 Napa households in this age group barely making ends meet on a day-to-day basis, it is nearly impossible for them to save for the future.
- **Unemployed and uninsured** – Currently, about three out of four residents age 45-65 have employer-based health insurance (73% in Napa and 77% in Solano). However, as these residents head into retirement, there is concern about whether they will be able to find and afford health insurance. Without insurance, people often delay medical treatment until symptoms become so critical that they require more extensive and costly care.
- **Specialized care shortage** -- To keep up with population growth and projected need, services such as in-home care and hospice care will have to increase by over 140% in the region during the next 25 years just to sustain the level of care currently provided to the 65 to 80 year-old age group.

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- **Increasing diversity poses challenges** -- The needs of the burgeoning Latino population will take center stage, as this population is projected to comprise almost 38 percent of the total population in Solano and almost 42 percent in Napa by 2030. To address the cultural and language challenges of this group, social and health service networks will need to significantly boost the number of bilingual, culturally-sensitive staff.

Commenting on the findings, United Way of the Bay Area’s Health Program Officer Vena Ford said, “Service providers, local governments and planning bodies in Solano and Napa must begin to examine how they, and the community as a whole, can prepare for these anticipated changes in our population and the corresponding increases in the demand for elder-appropriate services.”

Solano Community Foundation President and CEO Stephanie Wolf said, “We believe it is always important to have well-crafted tools to help decision-makers plan for the future. This study was designed and conducted to assist government entities, service providers, funders, and others who serve Solano and Napa Counties get a clearer image of the future of our middle-aged and older population. With this information, they can make decisions to affect positive change. We look forward to seeing how these data are used and where we go from here.”

In addition to capturing essential data, “The Coming Wave” report includes recommendations for providers, community organizations, policy makers, employers and individuals to help them act on the findings. UWBA will host community forums in September 2005, convening public agencies, private employers, providers and community-based organizations to discuss common interests, challenges, and actionable ideas for addressing the challenges raised by the report. More information about the forums is available by contacting Vena Ford at vford@uwba.org.

About United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA)

United Way of the Bay Area is the largest private funder of health and human services in Northern California. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way is creating meaningful change in local neighborhoods through targeted investments in early childhood development, affordable health insurance, youth violence prevention, increasing opportunities for the working poor and helping people in times of crisis. For more information, please visit www.uwba.org.

About the Solano Community Foundation

Founded in 1999, the Solano Community Foundation is dedicated to strengthening our community and improving the quality of life in Solano County, both now and for future generations. The Foundation is a vehicle for private donors to make lasting contributions to the Solano community. For more information, please visit www.solanocf.org.