



## SteppingStone Increases Staffing, Adds New Programs in Response to Growing Need

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Seniors and adults with disabilities comprise over 25% of the residents of San Francisco and this percentage is growing. As this population ages, the need for adult day health care, to allow people to maintain their health and stay in their homes, grows. To meet this need SteppingStone has always sought to increase services, growing from one care Center in 1983 to four in 2021, one of which operates two care shifts daily.

The COVID pandemic increases the urgency of providing adult day health care to those that need it, while simultaneously making it more difficult to do so. Many seniors, after months of staying home, are facing physical and mental health challenges. They need more care, but it must be provided within the strict guidelines that will keep them safe during the pandemic.

Because seniors are largely at home and need more care, SteppingStone's average daily attendance has grown over 25% in the last year. To meet this growing need of the participants, SteppingStone is increasing staffing. Some of the growing need is the rise of new programs, some is driven by changes in service delivery during COVID, and some is refilling positions that were suspended when in-Center care was stopped in March 2020. Below we review how this changing need is requiring increased staffing in different SteppingStone programs.

#### Centers Implement Hybrid Services

When limited in-Center care activities resumed last month, SteppingStone's Centers began operating a hybrid model of service delivery consisting of both remote and in-Center care. These programs run simultaneously every day with some participants in the Center and others receiving care remotely.



"Our staff has to operate two different programs every day, with all the complexities each involve. Both need to be aligned with each participant's individual care plan as well as addressing any urgent needs that arise. It's a tremendous amount of work." Nicole Clause, Program Director Presentation Center.

"Resuming in-Center care during the pandemic, even for a very limited number of participants, is much more complicated than the adult day health care model we operated before COVID. The care



we can provide and the way we provide it has changed, to keep clients safe.” Martina Leader, Program Director Golden Gate Center

“Our program participants want to get back their Center. They are lonely and know they need the care they can get there, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and in-person evaluations by the nurse and other clinicians. It’s difficult for us to explain to them that the Centers cannot fully reopen and they can only attend one or two days a week.” Melissa MacDonald, Program Director Mabini Center



Having clients in the Centers requires more staff to assist clinicians and assist participants with personal care, food service and other needs. In addition, remote care activities provided telephonically, online, via deliveries and doorstep visits all continue. To meet this demand, staffing expanded at all Centers by approximately 10%. Mission Creek Center, which continues to operate two care shifts daily, had a larger staff increase including new social work and nursing staff, as well as an activity coordinator and a Center receptionist.

“Mission Creek Center not only has the largest number of clients of the all the Centers, we also operate outreach programs directed toward the LGBTQ community and recently housed/formerly homeless San Franciscans. Daily attendance has risen significantly during the pandemic and we had to increase staffing to meet our participants’ needs. Fortunately the agency was able to do just that.” Diana Almanza, Program Director, Mission Creek Center



**Alzheimer’s Day Care Center to Open**

Over 45% of SteppingStone’s clients have some form of dementia. As this disease progresses they often are unable to participate in traditional adult day health care, but still need specialized care and activities.

To address this, SteppingStone sought and received a contract from the City of San Francisco to open an Alzheimer’s Day Care Resource Center at the Mission Creek Center. This Center will operate a distinct program with designated staff to not only provide in-Center care, but also training, information and support for families and caregivers. Plans are now being finalized and staff recruited for this important program. We will provide more information as it begins operations later this year.

**Outreach Project Starting Up**

SteppingStone has always sought to provide adult day health care to underserved communities in San Francisco. In addition to the programs focusing on the LGBTQ community and the recently housed, the agency has long planned an effort to reach both homeless San Franciscans and those living in single-room occupancy residences (SROs). This project will use a variety of methods to inform seniors of services available to them including adult day health care. The outreach effort will be operated by a Project Director and outreach staff, primarily social workers. Support for this effort has come from multiple institutions including Kaiser Permanente, the Joseph and Vera Long Foundation and the Carl Gellert & Celia

Berta Gellert Foundation.

“It is clear to me and SteppingStone’s Board of Directors that the agency needed to expand its workforce capacity at our Centers given the growth in daily attendance and the complexities of providing care during the pandemic. We also saw the need to create both the Alzheimer’s Center and the outreach program and are grateful to have received financial support to allow us to begin those efforts. We continue to do everything we can to provide the best possible care to our participants and offer our services to all San Franciscans that need it.” Daniel Gallagher.



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Photos: **(Top)** Nicole Clause, Program Director, Presentation Center  
**(Middle 1)** Martina Leader, Program Director, Golden Gate Center  
**(Middle 2)** Melissa MacDonald, Program Director Mabini Center  
**(Middle 3)** Diana Almanza, Program Director, Mission Creek Center  
**(Bottom)** Daniel Gallagher. Executive Director

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