

## MH children await health care funding

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By [Natalie Everett](#) - Staff Writer

Twelve Morgan Hill children could remain without health insurance unless the Community Health Foundation approves a funding request for \$11,000.

Upon the Morgan Hill City Council's direction, the Community Health Foundation will consider providing \$11,000 to the county's Healthy Kids program to provide one year's health insurance to 12 Morgan Hill children currently without it.

The program provides health care to 187 Morgan Hill children who didn't qualify for the MediCal or Healthy Families low-income programs. The programs cover children whose parents make 150 or 250 percent of the poverty level or less, respectively. A family of four whose household income is \$55,125 per year or less would qualify for one or both of these programs. Healthy Kids "catches" the children whose parents make up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line, or \$66,150 a year for a family of four.

Healthy Kids asked the city to front \$10,896 through the federal Community Development Block Grant. Each year the city receives about \$130,000 through the grant and divvies it up to programs and services that meet Morgan Hill's needs.

The nearly \$11,000 would pay for one year's medical insurance for 12 Morgan Hill children who are currently on the waiting list, Santa Clara County Healthy Kids Executive Director Kathleen King said. If Healthy Kids doesn't find a new funding source, the children will stay on the waiting list, King said. About a third of the children serviced by Healthy Kids receive funding through First Five; another third comes from the county's tobacco tax revenues, and the last third is through foundation like the Packard Foundation, she said.

"Foundations are starting to say, 'Find funding in other places,' " King said. "It will be hard to keep the kids who are on it, on it, let alone get the kids off the waiting list."

The council denied Healthy Kids' grant application, preferring instead to fund programs they'd given the grant money to in the past. These programs include Second Harvest Food Bank's Operation Brown Bag through Second Harvest Food Bank and Community Solution's El Toro Youth Center.

Councilman Larry Carr made a formal recommendation for the foundation to consider the application during the March 18 council meeting. The foundation received \$500,000 from the council when it first formed several years ago.

"I found that worthwhile, and thought that the Community Health Foundation, which has a significant amount of taxpayer money in it, and whose initiative is improving access to health care, could consider the request," Carr said.

However, the foundation's mission originally was to improve health services in Morgan Hill.

Local developer Dick Oliver, who sits on the foundation's board, said at the April 1 council meeting that the foundation board's initial reaction to the request was to deny it. After discussing it at some length, Oliver said the board generally felt they should focus their "limited resources" on bringing doctors to Morgan Hill. The foundation has been instrumental in bringing doctors to Morgan Hill after the Saint Louise Hospital closed several years ago.

According to Joe Mueller, who sits on the foundation's board, they'll be reviewing the application during their meeting later this month.

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