



**Santa Cruz**

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January 27, 2011

Chair Mark Stone  
Members of the Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Chair Stone and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The Commission on Disabilities recently undertook a survey to monitor Santa Cruz County disabled population's safety in the home and to provide information to the Board of Supervisors on the current safety issues for the disabled population of Santa Cruz County.

On the survey, ten simple questions asked were designed to identify types of disability, living situations and basic level safety functions. See attached survey. A web-based survey distributed through Foster Anderson's Shared Adventure extensive-mail network. Paper surveys were included in Shared Adventure's newsletter and were distributed by the Meals on Wheels.

**Survey Results<sup>1</sup>:**

The disabled persons responding:

- Have mobility challenges (63.8%) and strength or endurance challenges (52%).
- Live in the community with family support (39.2%)
- Are able to get a response to a request for help (81.9%)
- Can get their medications (92%)
- Can get food and water throughout the day (93%)
- Can get to medical appointments (89.9%)
- Have adapted equipment in safe working order (57.5%)
- Have never had a wound that is slow to heal (43.8%)
- Know how to get help in an external disaster (64.2%)
- Can get out of the home in an emergency (87%)

<sup>1</sup> A total of 151 surveys were returned. The number was higher than anticipated. See attached summary.

COMMISSIONERS				
<u>1ST DISTRICT</u>	<u>2ND DISTRICT</u>	<u>3RD DISTRICT</u>	<u>4TH DISTRICT</u>	<u>5TH DISTRICT</u>
J. Daugherty	C. Stone	D. Lane	J. Workman- Cosentino	P. Heylin
R. McGaw	T. Crain	J. Quigg	Vacancy	Vacancy

The concerns identified are:

- **35.8% do not know how to get help if there was an external disaster**
- **56% have wound care and healing issues**
- 16.1% cannot always call for help and get a response.
- 13% cannot get out of the home in an emergency
- 11.2% do not have adapted equipment in safe working order
- 10% cannot get to medical appointments
- 8% cannot always get their medications
- 7% cannot get adequate food and water.

**Recommendations:**

The Commission on Disabilities will:

1. Develop a plan of action in year 2011, to address the lack of knowledge among the disabled population for:
  - a) Help if there is an external disaster
  - b) Wound risk and management.
2. Refine survey tool, maintaining the focus on survival safety assessment.
3. Assess distribution process and establish plan for distribution to reach greater community on an every other year basis.
4. Communicate findings with existing organizations that promote health of the disabled populations in the Santa Cruz County and with the disabled population itself.

We hope that you will find these efforts enlightening. The Commission on Disabilities is committed to its mandate of advising the Board on the current situation faced by disabled county residents.

Sincerely,

Peter Heylin  
Chair