

November 24, 2004

Dear Supervisor Elsbernd

In an *Asian Week* Editorial published on October 28<sup>th</sup> 1999, Health Commission President Dr. Edward Chow described Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) as an increasingly important resource for the elders and families of our growing Asian communities, especially because “Asian enrollment will go higher as our population ages.” Writing in support of the Bond Measure to rebuild LHH, Dr. Chow argued that since the adults in many Asian families are typically working full-time, it is difficult to provide the “highest care possible” for a senior that is “simply too ill to receive care at home.” Five years have passed since Dr. Chow wrote his letter in support of LHH, yet instead of a rising admission rate for patients of Chinese descent, the admission rate has plunged by almost 50%.

In March 2004, the San Francisco Department of Public Health imposed a new admission policy that assigned the highest priority for admission to Laguna Honda Hospital to patients from San Francisco General Hospital. As a result, Chinese residents who utilize local community hospitals, such as Chinese Hospital and Saint Francis Memorial Hospital, are denied admission to Laguna Honda Hospital. In 1998, 11% of the total new admits to LHH were patients of Chinese descent. In 2004, the total percentage of patients of Chinese descent dropped to 6%. This discriminatory admissions policy at Laguna Honda Hospital is denying the Chinese residents of San Francisco access to health services.

In conversations with social workers at these local community hospitals, they are frustrated over the difficulty that they have encountered in discharging patients to Laguna Honda Hospital. One social worker at Saint Francis Memorial Hospital’s Skilled Nursing Unit discharged 41 patients of Asian descent to community Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) from January 2004 until November 2004. During that period, only one of the forty-one discharged patients was admitted to Laguna Honda Hospital. The community social workers further reported their difficulty in discharging patients to Laguna Honda Hospital’s Hospice and SNF wards.

Family members have also personally expressed their concerns regarding their inability to access services at Laguna Honda Hospital. Recently, an elderly Chinese gentleman was discharged from Laguna Honda Hospital to his home. Several days later, he suffered a stroke and received acute care at UCSF. His family requested a transfer to Laguna Honda Hospital for SNF care and rehabilitation. He was denied admittance because he received care outside SFGH. Family members are distressed that the utilization of community hospitals will decrease their ability to access services at Laguna Honda

Hospital. The new admissions policy creates a serious dilemma for many Chinese families that is sadly having serious consequences on the lives of many elderly Chinese.

As the population of elderly Chinese San Francisco residents rise, Laguna Honda Hospital needs to meet the needs of the community. The specialized services at Laguna Honda need to be made available to all residents of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

[Signature]  
Cindia Lok, M.S.W.

[Signature]  
Sharon Pretti, L.C.S.W.

[Signature]  
Rita Ng, M.S.W.

[Signature]  
Jnais Takamoto, L.C.S.W.

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Alice Leung, M.S.W.

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Dale Thomas, L.C.S.W.

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Paul Kelley, M.S.W.

[Signature]  
Linda Hitomi, L.C.S.W.

## Note

Attached to this November 24 letter to Supervisor Elsbernd were:

- The *Asian Week* guest editorial by Dr. Chow. It can be found at :

[http://www.asianweek.com/1999\\_10\\_28/opinion\\_lagunahonda.html](http://www.asianweek.com/1999_10_28/opinion_lagunahonda.html)

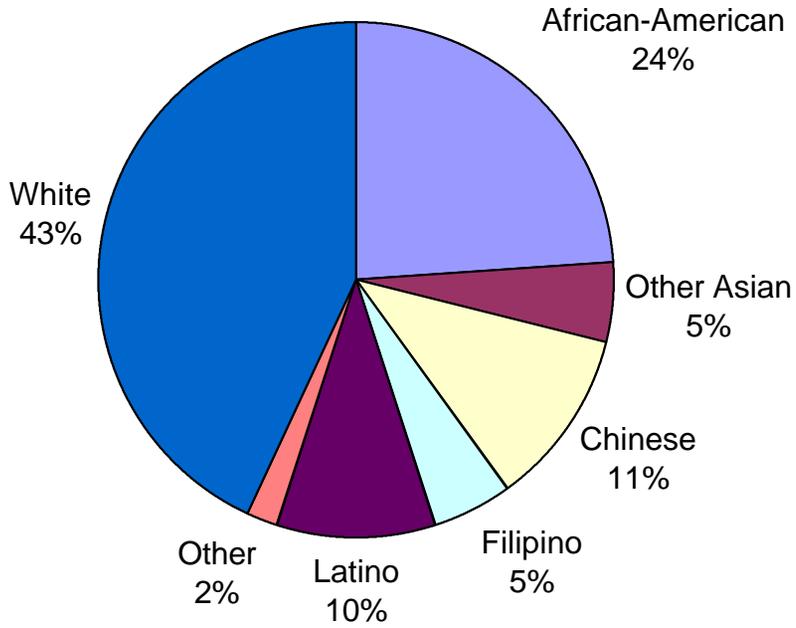
Note: There are underscores between 1999, 10, and 28 in the URL above.

- Two pie charts that appear on the following page.
- An advertisement titled “Generations of Compassion” that appeared in print during the 1999 campaign to pass Proposition A. It featured a photo of Rita Ng and contained her quote:

“For generations, San Francisco has taken care of its disabled and elderly. They deserve our continued care and support. Please vote Yes on Proposition A.”

— *Rita Ng*  
*Medical Social Worker;*  
*Laguna Honda Hospital*

**Laguna Honda Hospital**  
**Distribution of Residents by Race/Ethnicity**  
June 30, 1998  
(n = 1,158)



**Laguna Honda Hospital**  
**Distribution of Residents by Race/Ethnicity**  
June 30, 2004  
(n = 1,036)

