



## Peninsula Special Interest Lions Club Charities, Inc.

**A LEGACY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS AND EDUCATION**

**WE GET THE JOB DONE**

August 20, 2022

James Conforti, Interim President and CEO  
Sutter Health  
2200 River Plaza Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Mr. Conforti,

We are writing to you today in support of Warm Water Wellness, a nonprofit that is trying to reopen the Mack E. Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center therapy pool that was permanently closed by Sutter Health a year ago. We are a medically-based Lions club, helping clients with issues such as high blood pressure, weight loss and diabetes. Our clinics offer vaccines and general information on lifestyle changes to improve their health and welfare. We often recommended the therapy pool to clients in need of gentle, safe methods of recovery from injury/pain or for healthy exercise. We are proud to join with Warm Water Wellness in their efforts, and many of our club members were avid users of the pool for health reasons.

Though Lions Clubs do not generally get involved with political situations, we do believe that our medical focus includes a responsibility to the community, our community, to support all efforts to KEEP THIS POOL OPEN!

This medical resource has been open for rehabilitation for over 25 years. Dr. Mack E. Mickelson, an arthritis and osteoporosis specialist, was the inspiration for this therapy pool, and it was built with community donations. It has been an exceptional gift to the community offering many forms of therapy over the years and has been a vital part of the rehabilitation center at Mills Health Center in San Mateo. There's no pool like it in the immediate area.

The Mickelson Therapy Pool was heated to approximately 93 degrees, has a wheelchair ramp, a chair lift, ADA bathrooms and showers, exercise equipment, and a parallel bar submerged in waste high waters for clients to stretch and work out in the buoyancy of the saltwater chemistry carefully maintained by the staff.

My husband is a 96-year-old WWII/Korean Veteran, recovering from cancer and neuropathy. I am recovering from hip and knee replacements. We both have used the pool since 2010, when our physicians insisted that we have rehabilitation for our conditions. We have been Lions for ten years serving the community's seniors, veterans and the vulnerable.

When the therapy pool closed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 lockdown, we did our best at home to keep ourselves safe and in good shape, but our experience at the pool was sorely missed. Upon hearing that Sutter Health had decided to scrap the pool, we became deeply concerned that we would have to go a great distance for therapy. The Mickelson pool is just ten minutes from our home. Also, we learned that the physicians that we see at Sutter Health didn't realize that the pool was closed permanently! They were shocked to learn the news, but not surprised since the new CEO, Janet Wagner, seemed to be closing community programs at a rapid pace or privatizing those that were not money-makers for the health center.

The mission statement at Sutter Health suggests that you are a "nonprofit and very involved in community needs and relations." NOT TRUE!

We have learned that Sutter will not meet with the Peninsula Health Care District (which has offered to financially support the reopening) or with community members, such as Warm Water Wellness. You are in dereliction of your duties to the community and should be investigated by sources within the state that deeply care about community resources being eliminated for a company vested in profit only.

We hope that you will listen to our plea for action and consideration on this matter. Please take advantage of the PHCD's generous offer to facilitate an expeditious reopening of this facility. WE DO NOT WISH TO LOSE THIS VITAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE!

Thank you,  
Lions Judy Martin, Administrator  
Lion Veteran Stanford Martin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

cc: Sutter Health Board of Directors

- Grace Davis, Vice President and Chief Public Affairs Officer/Chief of Staff, Sutter Health
- Janet Wagner, CEO, Sutter Health Mills-Peninsula Medical Center
- Melissa White, Director, Government Affairs, Sutter Health Bay Area
- Rob Bonta, Esq., California Attorney General
- Peninsula Health Care District Board of Directors
- Joseph W. Cotchett, Esq.
- Lindsay Raike, CEO, Warm Water Wellness

**151 Flying Cloud Isle  
Foster City, CA 94404**

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