

Daily Pilot

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com

Local doctors report E.R. visits are down

Hoag Hospital physicians are concerned that fear of the coronavirus is keeping people away, even if they are experiencing an emergency.

BY HILLARY DAVIS

Cardiac patients at Hoag Hospital's Newport Beach and Irvine locations have dropped by half in the past three months, and Dr. Subbarao Myla wants to take that as a silver lining.

Maybe the stay-at-home orders that have all but shut down most of society for the past several weeks have created less traffic, less time in stressful workplaces and more attention to healthful habits — things that could reduce heart attack triggers.

But the veteran cardiologist worries that the specter of the COVID-19 coronavirus is keeping people out of emergency rooms even if they're having a heart attack.

His colleague Dr. Michael Brant-Zawadzki, a neuroradiologist, has seen the same reluctance in stroke patients, sometimes leading to irreversible damage.

"I was afraid of catching the virus so I didn't come," he said they say.

He replies, "Well, now it's too late to treat your stroke. I'm sorry."

Orange County health officer Dr. Nicholas Quick reminded people this week to call 911 or go to an E.R. in case of a medical emergency, despite any unease about leaving home — especially for a

See **E.R.**, page A5

Costa Mesa projects losses of up to \$18.5M from impacts of coronavirus

BY FAITH E. PINHO

As people clutch their pocketbooks tighter, Costa Mesa is feeling the economic effects. The city could see a loss of at least \$10 million — and up to \$18.5 million or greater — through the end of June, according to city staff projections.

The Costa Mesa City Council will meet Tuesday to consider a host of options to accommodate the projected economic impacts of the coronavirus on the city's \$174-million budget. A loss of revenue from local sales, hotel and business license taxes has stunted the city's coffers. Broken down, the numbers are grim.

In an optimistic projection, sales taxes would decline by at least 50%.

See **Losses**, page A6



NEW LINE, WHO DIS?

Seniors isolated amid coronavirus measures find help through GoldenTalk senior chat and crisis line. Launched by former Costa Mesa resident Kimberly Lewis, founder of the I Did Something Good Today Foundation, the chat line serves Californians 60 and older and has almost 200 volunteers.

BY ADA TSENG



Courtesy of Kimberly Lewis

KIMBERLY LEWIS, second from right, and her daughter Geniva Myricks, right, delivered water, paper towels and toilet paper to a couple in their 90s in Riverside recently. Lewis launched the GoldenTalk chat and crisis line for senior citizens on March 23.

Kimberly Lewis had planned to launch the GoldenTalk senior chat and crisis line May 1.

Then the COVID-19 coronavirus happened. Now, while people of all ages are socially isolating to try to contain the virus, senior citizens remain among the most vulnerable to serious effects — both from the virus and from isolation.

A 2018 AARP study determined that prolonged isolation carries the same health risks as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and that social isolation affects an estimated 8 million adults older than 50.

Lewis had planned to make a pre-launch announcement of GoldenTalk at the Aging Into the Future Conference, which was scheduled for April 4 but postponed. But the platform was ready, so it was launched early, on March 23.

The 24-hour line serves Californians 60 and older. So far it has volunteers who speak Spanish, Mandarin, Korean,

Farsi, Tagalog, Russian and German — with a priority to recruit speakers of other languages. Families of seniors also can request regular wellness calls for their loved ones.

Because Lewis has worked in Los Angeles and Orange counties — she lived in Costa Mesa before moving to downtown L.A. last year for this project — the team is most knowledgeable about resources in those counties, though the goal is to expand its connections statewide.

"We don't just say 'Call this number,'" Lewis said. "We tell them we'll get back to them within 24 hours, and this gives me a day to find the resource, call myself, get through ... and then two days later, follow up. We go the extra steps. We're taking care of seniors to make sure they get the best care possible and aren't just passed along."

Ever since she was a Police Explorer cadet for the Compton Police Depart-

ment at age 14, Lewis has had a passion for working with seniors. She remembers visiting older adults in nursing homes, baking them cookies and cheering them up during the holidays.

But it wasn't until decades later — after her three children, whom she raised as a single mother, became adults — that she first got the idea to start a nonprofit for seniors called the I Did Something Good Today Foundation.

When she was working at Volunteers of America Los Angeles managing a homeless women's shelter, she saw people "dumping off their mothers and grandmothers as if they were dumping off stray animals."

As horrified as she was by that, she was equally concerned about how difficult it was for her and her staff to figure out how to help them. Their own shel-

See **Chat line**, page A3



File Photo

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:

LAGUNA FOOD PANTRY ANNOUNCES \$85,500 IN DONATIONS

Page A3

COMMENTARY: HOAG HOSPITAL IS TAKING EXCEPTIONAL CARE WITH COVID-19 PATIENTS

Page A4

NEWPORT BEACH RINGLEADER OF CHURCH-BASED PONZI SCHEME TO PLEAD GUILTY

Page A3

THE CROWD: CHEFS SERVE SPECIALS FOR MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION

Page A6

Corona del Mar's Oasis Senior Center gives away 1,800 masks

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

The Oasis Senior Center may be closed during the coronavirus pandemic, but that doesn't mean senior citizens are forgotten.

Among the ways the center in Corona del Mar has been helping was a drive-by mask giveaway Thursday.

Mike Zimmerman, president of Friends of Oasis, the nonprofit support organization that works with the center, jumped at the chance to buy 1,000 protective masks for the group's members through a T-shirt business run by the son of Oasis social services supervisor Susie DiGiovanna.

"Some will be used for Meals on Wheels delivery, for our kitchen staff, for Friends of Oasis and city staff employees and whoever needs masks," Zimmerman said.

With cars backed up as far as San Joaquin Hills Road to the north and East Coast Highway to the south, the 1,000 white-and-

blue disposable masks were gone within the first 20 minutes of the giveaway.

But coincidentally, DiGiovanna had gone to Santa Fe Springs to pick up an additional 1,000 masks that her son Michael MacGregor of the Forecast Agency donated earlier in the day.

While the line of cars continued onto the senior center property, people patiently awaited their turn to receive the four-mask-per-family allotment.

"It worked out beyond our wildest dreams," Zimmerman said. "We gave away 1,800 masks to about 450 cars."

He said his group is trying to secure more masks for future giveaways.

According to Celeste Jardine-Haug, Oasis' senior services manager, responding to homebound seniors has kept the staff and volunteers busy.

"To me, what a senior center is for is to keep people engaged in life and socialized," Jardine-Haug



A TEAM OF Oasis Senior Center volunteers packs a second delivery of 1,000 masks to give away as recipients waited outside in their cars Thursday.

Susan Hoffman

said. "Social isolation is really difficult for those at an advanced age and who are not able to talk with people."

A joint effort among Oasis staff, Age Well Senior Services and Friends of Oasis has kept things running, according to Jardine-Haug.

"Our staff have been working every day making sure that senior services are still being provided," she said. "I have transportation still running for essential services and staff helping with meal delivery, as some volunteers have chosen to stay at home."

With many seniors missing out

on social activities normally provided by the center, Oasis has increased the list of seniors it calls daily as part of a telephone reassurance program.

"We call people and touch base so they are not lonely," Jardine-

See **Masks**, page A5