more functional it is.

stations.

## PATIENT FIGHTS THREATEN LICENSE

Incidents at dementia facility reflect larger challenges with memory care centers

BY PAUL SISSON

A string of fights between dementia patients at a local memory care center, including a severe beating that led to the death of a 92-year-old woman, has put the facility's license operating

Elmcroft of La Mesa is scheduled for a license-revocation hearing before the state Department of Social Services in late August, although public records show that concerns about inadequate supervision and staff training had mounted since

In addition, the 56-bed center faces a civil lawsuit and an investigation by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office.

Over the years, the Department of Social Services has not been shy about taking away licenses. It did so in 248 cases during the past five years, according to the agency's records. This year's license-revocation count is

Most of the shuttered facilities are small — they have an average of 10 beds each. But there have been a handful of cases involving large assisted-living facilities, including three with 100 beds

The Elmcroft case is the latest example of longstanding concerns about nonmedical assisted-living homes housing people with severe neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, patient advocates said.

On March 28, the state formally accused Elmcroft of lapses in care that "violated the personal rights of clients." It highlighted three incidents in early 2015 that involved resident-on-resi-

In a statement to The San Diego Union-Tribune. Kentucky-based Elmcroft Senior Living, which runs 82

ating with California's investigation.

"Elmcroft takes seriously its responsibilities to provide a safe environment for its residents and to provide competent and appropriately trained associates." the statement said.

The company declined to discuss the incidents referenced in the state's documents. "In light of the ongoing nature of the investigation and out of respect for the families involved and our residents' privacy rights, Elmcroft has no further comment at this time," the statement said.

The first incident referenced in the state's accusation occurred Feb. 8, 2015 when a resident diagnosed with dementia and "known to be aggressive toward other residents" struck a fellow resident in the ribs "without justification."

On Feb. 20, 2015, a different resident, again diagnosed with dementia and known to be aggressive, attacked a woman in her room,

nieces of woman killed at Elmcroft of La Mesa

taken to hospitals for treatment

11:27 a.m. on the day of the

altercation. Stanley Brodke,

who was believed to have as-

saulted Desick, was found in

an adjacent room "naked

and crawling on the floor

both arms and scratches on

his chest, investigators said.

Desick had blood-filled con-

tusions on both sides of her

head. Both residents were

Brodke had skin tears on

yelling, 'get the hell out.'"

MORE ON MEMORY CARE CENTERS

**SD1** • A raft of laws might improve conditions for

residents; also, what you can do to advocate for patients.

on the floor of her room at died on March 8, 2015. The

iuries

nieces, to transfer the woman to a place with a higher level of care if she ever became a danger to herself or others.

Elmcroft's files show that regulators have taken issue with the memory-care cen ter's staffing levels and training protocols for more than a year. They also indicate that even seven months after Desick's death, the Department of Social Services still cited significant conerns with how Elmcroft was being run. The agency ordered more hiring of staff members, better screening of residents and the use of a psychiatrist to improve staff training, but it didn't start the process of license revo-

Regulators also did not ban new admissions to Elm-

Michael Weston, deputy director of public affairs for the Department of Social Services, said the agency does not discuss active legal

He added that regulators believe conditions have improved at the facility.

"Elmcroft of La Mesa has implemented a plan that in-

## AIDS CURE NO LONGER **BEYOND IMAGINATION**

S. Africa conference draws attention to gains against virus

THE WASHINGTON POST

Not many years ago, the idea of defeating the resilient virus that causes AIDS was far-fetched. But as 18,000 people gather this coming week in Durban. South Africa, for the 21st International AIDS Conference, the prospect of a cure is plausible enough that it is attracting increasing amounts of money, scientific research and attention.

Discussion of a cure will lead off the conference. which comes little more than a month after the United Nations committed to action to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, despite formidable obstacles. Leaders of the global battle against HIV have described 2016 as a pivotal year in their effort.

one of the great scientific challenges ever undertaken," Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, one of the discoverers of the virus, told reporters in a news briefing. "Our challenge is to take the science forward." Worldwide funding for re-

"Achieving such a cure is

search on a cure rose to \$201.8 million in 2015, up 25 percent over the previous year and more than double the \$88.1 million spent in 2012, two years after the International AIDS Society launched a program to achieve a cure. The vast majority of the money comes from governments around the world. On Wednesday, the National Institutes of Health awarded \$30 million annually for the next five years to six U.S. research

Also scheduled for this fall is a large-scale clinical trial of an HIV vaccine, which will be conducted in South Africa and co-funded by NIH.

tious Diseases, which is

Research scheduled to be

resented at the AIDS con

ference includes several

strategies for a cure, includ-

ing gene editing and stem-

cell therapy. The positive

long-term impact of anti-

retroviral therapy also will

Transplanting stem cells

from a donor known to be

immune to HIV is expensive

and risky. This technique

was used on a patient who

was being treated for acute

myeloid leukemia and is not

practical for other people.

But it did produce the one

recognized cure in the his-

tory of the disease, accord-

ing to a preview of the Inter-

national AIDS Society's up-

dated scientific strategy for

a cure, which was published

online Monday in the journal

Nature Medicine. The hur-

dles to a cure include the

adaptability and persist-

ence of the virus. It took

decades to turn HIV from a

death sentence into a

chronic, manageable dis-

ease through antiretroviral

therapy, and few are willing

be discussed.

leading the vaccine trial.

centers working toward a

"The two greatest challenges remaining in HIV/ AIDS research are finding a cure and developing a safe and effective preventive vaccine." said Anthony Fauci. director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infec-

then to 18 percent by 2035.

Leaders in beach cor shops that offer rentals.

Program struggling

to attract users, get

BY DAVID GARRICK

SAN DIEGO

new kiosks approved

San Diego's bike-sharing

network, a key component of

the city's plan to fight cli-

mate change, will fail with-

out greater cooperation

sway such public opinion. mind people in the beach communities that bicycling is an important 21st century transportation mode that replaces car trips and relieves traffic congestion,

and can then drop it off anywhere along the network. So the larger the network, the

The report also suggests sidies would allow DecoBike designate one prominent of-The report also criticizes ficial to be the single point of contact on bike sharing and the transit system for resisting kiosks at trolley and bus refer communications about

the program to that official. Bike sharing is key to "When residents comlong-term efforts to reduce plain to their elected officials carbon emissions because about the presence of bikerental bikes can fill small sharing stations, they regaps in the transportation ceive inconsistent responsnetwork known as the "last es," the report says. "One official may tell them to talk to

the city should appoint or to be less aggressive about targeting high-traffic tourist Bike-sharing programs in northern cities, such as

Minneapolis, are seasonal

and require financial help. In contrast, San Diego's mild climate allows yearround opportunities for strong revenue. The report says DecoBike has successfully run an unsubsidized bike-sharing network in Mi-

Kayla Race, director of operations and programs for the nonprofit Climate Action Campaign, said the

"In order to protect our quality of life from the impacts of climate change, and ply with its climate plan, it's imperative we provide real transportation alternatives for folks to get out of their



## examination did not use Xalleging negligence, wrong-And on March 31 of the ray or other technology to ful death and breach of consame year, a fight occurred examine the widow before tract. Their attorney, Nata-

"They very obviously could not control her, or the

residents around her, to adequately protect her

— even with the use of medications." Natalie Holm • attorney for

between yet another set of dementia patients, this time resulting in a finger injury. An autopsy report indicated that the victim in the second fight was Norma Desick, 92, who moved to

diagnosis of advanced dementia, hearing impairment and osteoporosis. According to the medical examiner's report, staff found the wheelchair-bound

found that Desick's initial discharging her back to Elm-

croft. Back Desick's condition continued to deteriorate. Sharp Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa later found she Elmcroft in 2011 with a had a methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection, two rib fractures and a collapsed left

Desick was placed on hospice care after these inSan Diego Superior Court, lie Holm of San Diego, said the suit is about more than the day Desick was fatally injured.

medical examiner described

her death as homicide by

multiple blunt-force in

Tanya Sierra, a spokes-

woman for the District At-

tornev's Office, wouldn't

specify whether any Elm-

croft employee would be

prosecuted for failing to pre-

vent the altercation. "This

case is under review for po-

tential criminal charges," Si-

Desick's nieces filed a civ-

il lawsuit against Elmcroft in

ELMCROFT

"For my client, this wasn't one incident. She had a long history of aggression, acting out, they very obviously could not control her, or the residents around her. to adequately protect her even with the use of medications." Holm said.

The attorney said it was

creases staffing levels on all three shifts. A new administrator is in place at the facility and a new divisional vice president has been appointed to oversee Elmcroft of La Mesa. The department continues to monitor the facility to ensure compliance with regulations ...," Weston

The facility's hearing is scheduled to last from Aug. 29 through Sept. 1 in downtown San Diego.

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woman in the fetal position juries were discovered. She

## S.D. POSTS EMERGENCY CALLS, OTHER KEY DATA

City officials hope to spur innovation BY DAVID GARRICK

SAN DIEGO

Local residents and people around the world are knowing where police and firefighters have responded to emergencies in San Diego, which city parking meters bring in the most cash and where tap water tests have raised health concerns.

The city this month posted 44 datasets on its website that include those, along with where solar panels are being installed, the locations of city-approved special events and many

City officials posted the data sets — and plan to post roughly 70 more over the next four years — as part of a new "open data" policy to encourage innovation and analysis that could lead to

"The portal will give app developers, software engineers and the public the opportunity to use this data in innovative ways that we haven't even dreamed of yet," Mayor Kevin Faulconer

Two other goals of the policy, which has bipartisan support, are increasing government transparency and allowing residents to know more about what's going on in their neighborhood and citywide.

Other posted data

sets include leases of cityowned properties, streetsweeping schedules, campaign donations, code violations and typical traffic

volumes on many streets. The goal isn't to encourtially make life in San Diego simpler, said Maksim Pecherskiy, the city's chief data

"It's digital information that translates to the real world," said Pecherskiy, singling out parking-meter data as particularly useful. "I already know someone who is using this to figure

out where the best spot to park is around her building." And that data could also have wide applications if software or app developers

explore it, he said. "We're trying to target software developers that will want to apply a machinelearning model to predict when a parking meter will be available on July 15th or July 18th in a certain neighborhood." Pecherskiy



munity leaders and ordinary residents to make stronger cases when lobbying for new policies or programs. City officials or outsiders

can also spot trends, such as whether more homeowners age voyeurism but to poten- are installing solar panels in downloaded in common coastal areas versus inland areas or in poor areas versus

Knowing when and

el routes or plan to attend those events. The city tests drinking water quality at 85 sites per week for E. coli and coliform. and the results will be continually updated on the site. Unlike other cities, San Diego will auto-

Data sets of particular interest to residents will probably be the locations of emergency calls, details on more to us than that," Pechupcoming special events. and tap water tests, Pecherskiv said. where streets will be closed

for events like the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and weekly farmers markets can help people choose different trav-

harder.

formation up to the public," he said. "I think

wealthy areas.

billion annual budget.

city controls is striking, San Diego has more than "The concept of open data is opening that in-

swept. The process is just less effective, because parked cars make sweeping The volume of data the Pecherskiy said, noting that

10,000 employees and a \$3

matically update the majority of the data sets, giving the Sensitive and private in public reliable, up-to-date information in an easy-to-

use format, Pecherskiy said. Data sets are broken up into smaller files and can be digital file formats that are easy to work with, he said

'Typically, agencies toss up a bunch of data on a portal and call it a day, but transparency means a lot erskiy said. "Our team took the time to understand the data, explain the data and simplify the data available in this portal so that you don't need to be a computer

programmer to view it, analyze it or build with it." Residents can also use the data to help keep local streets clean by moving their

be swept. Only 9 percent of city

streets have parking restrictions for street sweeping, but all other streets also get

transparency is some-

hing people really ex-

pect these days,

and it's a pretty

formation, such as the health records and social security numbers of residents or city employees, aren't included in the data sets. "Putting other people's

information out in public is fully making sure we avoid." Pecherskiy said. Some studies have predicted that open data, which has been gaining momentum since the concept was first suggested more than 10 years ago, has the potential

> unlock trillions in economic value worldwide with innovation and efficien-Councilman Mark Kersey said San Diego, the first government agency in

the region to adopt an open data policy, is setting a strong example for others. "The quality of San Diego's open data portal is unmatched," he said, "Not only will software developers and the general public have access to unique data sets and formats, but our own city employees will be able to use it to make our government smarter and more effi-

cient," he said The data sets can be accessed at data.sandiego.gov.

to predict when a cure might (619) 269-8906 be feasible. @UTDavidGarrick

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