San Francisco Department of Public Health

San Francisco, California

San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center is the primary safety net provider in the San Francisco Bay area, with 724 licensed acute care beds. The hospital is the only Level 1 trauma center in the Bay area. The emergency department provides 14,000 ambulance visits annually, in addition to 65,000 emergency room encounters. Among the inpatient population, 40 percent of patients are enrolled in Medi-Cal, the state Medicaid program, and 30 percent of patients are uninsured. Consequently, San Francisco General Hospital had an operating loss last year of nearly $100 million, which was subsidized by the City. The City has already indicated that it will not provide that level of support this year.

Additional Medicaid cuts will result in the closure of 22 acute care beds, reducing annual volume by 8,000 inpatient days. Reduced bed capacity will double the rate of ambulance diversions, resulting in thousands of diverted patients with delays of as much as 45 minutes, depending on the distance to the diversion hospital. This back-up will wreak havoc on the entire system of emergency care in San Francisco. Physician staffing could also be further reduced, potentially impacting radiology, neurosurgery, orthopedics, and general surgery. The hospital ability to make investments in maintenance and upgrading of critical health care equipment will be severely compromised.

The impact at-a-glance:

- Closure of 22 beds, reducing inpatient capacity by 8,000 inpatient days
- Increased ambulance diversions for thousands of patients, delaying emergency care by as much as 45 minutes
- Possible physician staffing reductions, particularly in radiology and all surgical subspecialties
- Inability to maintain and upgrade critical medical equipment

Press Contact at San Francisco Department of Public Health:
Eileen Shields
Tel. 415-554-2507