

## Bay Area Life: On Lok Provides Innovative Ways to Help Elders Thrive in Bay Area

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On Lok is providing innovative ways to help elders thrive in the Bay Area.

On Lok is a family of community-based, not-for-profit organizations whose mission is to enable seniors to maintain a quality of life that lets them live in their communities where they can lead independent, active lives for as long as possible.



Like many great organizations, On Lok began with an idea. In 1971, dentist Dr. William Gee and social worker Marie-Louise Ansak saw that traditional models of health care in San Francisco were not meeting the needs of elderly in the community. They created one of the country's first senior day health care centers, providing older adults in the Chinatown, North Beach and Lower Nob Hill neighborhoods of San Francisco hot meals, health and social services and supervision during the daytime, while allowing them to return to their homes in the evening.

Our founders understood that seniors wanted to live at home while aging and needed medical and social support in order to do so. In response to this need, Mrs. Ansak designed a comprehensive system of health and social care based on

the British day hospital model that allowed people to receive care while living at home. Starting with these basic principles, Mrs. Ansak and Dr. Gee created On Lok - Cantonese for "peaceful, happy home".

From the beginning, On Lok has been committed to innovating new ways to care for the frail elderly. Our founders worked tirelessly to promote the idea of care at home, and raised funds in the community. Through the mid-1970s, the day center model evolved, adding in-home support services, then primary care services and case management of acute and chronic health services to help people remain living in the community.



After a Medicare-funded demonstration project in 1979, On Lok's model received waivers from the Medicare and Medicaid programs in 1983. On Lok's innovative spirit introduced a new financing method for long-term care. In exchange for fixed monthly payments from Medicare and Medicaid for each enrollee, On Lok was responsible for delivering a full range of health and long-term care services, including hospital and nursing home care - bearing full financial risk. In 1986, Congressional legislation made On Lok's waivers permanent and authorized similar waivers for community-based organizations replicating the model. Following these milestones, On Lok began attracting the support of major foundations and organizations to test whether the model could be replicated in other communities. The program that On Lok pioneered became known as Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). Based on the vision and hard work of the co-founders, PACE expanded into a nationally replicated program.



As the needs of the seniors in the Bay Area grew, so did On Lok. In 1995, 30th Street Senior Center became part of the On Lok family of senior services, providing multi-lingual and multi-cultural services to active San Francisco seniors. On Lok's commitment to serve Bay Area seniors resulted in the PACE program expanding with new centers, first within San Francisco, then later to the East and South Bay. In 2006, the On Lok's PACE program took on a new brand name - On Lok Lifeways.

Starting as a noble idea to serve the elderly over 40 years ago, On Lok has grown to a family of community-based, not-for-profit organizations whose mission is to enable seniors to maintain a quality of life that lets them live in their communities where they can lead independent, active lives. With its strong foundational values and leadership, On Lok is poised to carry on that mission for years to come.