

\$700K Sutter County employee clinic approved

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[\\$700K Sutter County employee clinic approved](#) By Andrew Creasey [Appealdemocrat.com](#)

After delaying the decision to better understand the issue, the Sutter County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved establishing a wellness clinic for county employees for an initial cost of about \$700,000.

The need for the health clinic was due to the recent switch in health insurance administrators from Tri-County School Insurance Group to the San Joaquin Valley Insurance Authority. In negotiations with employees, the county committed to funding the clinic.

Board Chairman Ron Sullenger was initially skeptical of the idea, but voted in favor of the clinic at Tuesday's meeting. "I'm ecstatic that we will show substantial savings," Sullenger said.

The clinic has an annual cost of \$570,000 for the first year and will increase by 3 percent each year of the three-year agreement. That spending, however, is more than made up for in savings from reduced health care premiums from the new insurer, said county Administrator Jim Arkens.

By switching, the county immediately saved \$1.1 million. It also avoided paying for an 8.5 percent rate increase, which would have cost an additional \$1.4 million.

Sutter County Taxpayers Association President Pat Miller

again addressed the board with a number of concerns. She recommended that the board re-negotiate the need for a clinic with the employees so the county can use the savings to hire requested positions, including two sheriff's deputies, an internal auditor and an information technology security officer.