

# WELLNESS



ANA VENEGAS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Melania Orozco, from left, Maria Lopez, CalOptima's Cecilia Chavez and Juan Zavala gather at CalOptima's PACE Center in Garden Grove, an elder-care facility that opened last year. The PACE program uses a team-based, interdisciplinary approach.

## A GAME CHANGER

**CALOPTIMA PROGRAM HELPS KEEP SENIORS SELF-SUFFICIENT, AND OUT OF NURSING HOMES.**

BY CHRIS HAIRE  
STAFF WRITER

CalOptima, a county provider of health care and social services, opened its Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) center almost a year ago with the goal of improving the lives of seniors who otherwise could well be headed to nursing homes. The Garden Grove program, supported by state and local funds, serves north and parts of central Orange County as an insurance and medical provider emphasizing preventative medical treatment and social interaction.

To date, the center has about 40 clients, with room for about 180 more. We sat down with several participants who shared their stories. **PROFILES ON PAGE 8**

### WEEKLY WORKOUT

## Waddle your way to fitness

BY LEO SMITH AND LONDON HALL  
STAFF WRITERS

A quick scan of the animal kingdom wouldn't necessarily lead one to connect penguins with fitness. They are shaped rather like bowling pins and, you know, they wobble when they walk.

But trainer Bonnie Smith of Fit for One Design in Newport Beach actually translates their side-to-side motion into a leg and core exercise. She even named it after them.

Here's how to do Penguins:

- Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart as you stand on top of an exercise band, one end of the band in each hand.
- With your legs straight, shift your weight to your left leg and lean your body to the left, lifting your right foot

off the floor a couple of inches. Maintain contact between the band and your raised foot. Slowly move your right leg in and out to work the inner and outer thigh. This also engages your abs, as you try not to stumble. Now return the right foot to the floor and repeat on the other side, this time raising the left leg.

- To work the back of the legs, first extend the right leg back and forth slowly, again maintaining contact with the band, then switch to the left leg.

"What I love about working with the band in a standing position is that you're working on your balance, and we all know as we get older how important balance is," Smith says. "We want to strengthen the muscles surrounding our hip joints, so that if you take a fall, these muscles will support

the joint so you don't break anything. Because as we get older, which is going to happen with all of us, we don't want to fall and break our hip."

Whenever you're in a standing position creating movement, Smith says, your abs are working about as hard as they would doing a traditional crunch.

As with all exercises, proper form is key with Penguins, to get the greatest impact from the move and to limit the chance of injury.

"It's important to make sure you roll your shoulders back - draw your shoulder blades together so that you're working on your posture," Smith says. "You want your chin up, shoulders back, and then extend back. You'll see how difficult it is and how you really have to engage your abs to support your body. The abdominal muscles are your stabilizing muscles."



PHOTOS: ISAAC ARJONILLA, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER  
**Step 1: Start Penguins with your feet about shoulder-width apart, standing on an exercise band.**



**Step 2: Shift your weight to the left leg, raising your right leg slightly off the floor.**



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# PACE OFFERS PLACE

## Participants share their stories

FROM PAGE 1



PHOTOS: ANA VENEGAS STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Juan Zavala values the time he spends in the center's day area.

### JUAN ZAVALA

**Age:** 63  
**Residence:** Santa Ana  
**Time as PACE member:** Seven months

**His story:** Juan Zavala, who lives alone and uses a walker to get around, said he had trouble with doctors and the food at other local senior centers he attended in the past. But it's different at PACE.

"I don't have to worry about anything anymore," Zavala said. "I have no stress."

The former handyman said besides the benefits of having doctors and nurses working at the center, he also values the time spent in the day area – where occupational or recreational therapists will lead activities, such as painting or listening to music.

"I am very happy here," he said. "Everything is in one place, which makes it easier to take care of everything I need."

Zavala is an example of how PACE's comprehensive philosophy on health care can help save people's lives.

A few months ago, Zavala was waiting outside his home for the PACE driver to pick him up when suddenly he couldn't see. The driver called a doctor at PACE who said that Zavala should be taken directly to the center without stopping to pick up any other members.

The doctor examined him and determined his circulation was bad, Zavala said. They called for an ambulance. It turns out he had a serious prostate problem and spent several days in the hospital.

"Had the driver not been there to recognize something was wrong, I would have waited longer and then called 911," he said. "It might have been too late."

"I don't have to worry about anything anymore."

JUAN ZAVALA

### MARIA LOPEZ

**Age:** 71  
**Residence:** Santa Ana  
**Time as PACE member:** Five months

**Her story:** Maria Lopez's health had deteriorated so much before she joined PACE that the big toe on her left foot was amputated after becoming gangrenous. But her life improved at PACE.

"I feel like a queen," Lopez said. "All I'm missing is the crown. When I come here, I feel like I am coming to a party."

Lopez had been with the same doctor for a decade – a doctor who happened to also work for PACE. As the center was getting ready to open, the doctor told Lopez that she qualified for its programs.

Lopez, who has diabetes, said her foot became infected two years ago when she went on a trip to Mexico. She ended up spending several months in the hospital.

"That period helped me value things differently," said Lopez, a former Disneyland employee. "Since I came here, I'm not perfect, but I'm better. I can be myself again. I can help uplift people."

She also said she wished more people knew about PACE and tried to get accepted.

"They treat us like royalty here," she said. "When we don't come here, we miss it. The doctors, the nurses, everyone is kind and helpful."



"I feel like a queen. All I'm missing is the crown."

MARIA LOPEZ

### MELANIA OROZCO

**Age:** 66  
**Residence:** Buena Park  
**Time as PACE member:** Six months

**Her story:** Before she joined PACE, Melania Orozco would spend all day at home by herself while her daughter was at work.

"I feel very comfortable here," said Orozco, of her experience with PACE.

"They take good care of us. I was very isolated before I came here and now I have friends and good doctors. And the nurses are nice."

But Orozco, who has trouble seeing and uses a walker to steady herself, did not like the prospects of spending her days in a convalescent home. When her daughter approached her about becoming a member, she was upset. Not knowing about PACE, she thought she was being sent away from her family and home.

"I cried and cried," she said. "I didn't want to go to a nursing home."

But instead, she found a place of community. A PACE driver picks her up at her house and takes her to the center, where she spends several hours before being dropped off at home again.

"At this place, we find calmness and peace," Orozco said. "I have gotten better. I have more peace, I am comfortable, my health is better and they treat me well. They take care of all of us."



"At this place, we find calmness and peace."

MELANIA OROZCO



CalOptima's PACE Center in Garden Grove is an elder-care facility that opened last year.

### WHAT IS PACE?

PACE stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. It is a comprehensive health-care initiative for the most at-need seniors, providing clients with an opportunity to remain in their homes while still receiving specialized medical services.

PACE, a Medicare and Medi-Cal provider, acts as both an insurance and service provider. Once enrolled in PACE, members are set up with a team of specialists: a lead doctor, nutritionist, physical therapist and others. From there, the PACE team provides a range of services, from routine checkups to social activities and personal care – all the aspects of preventative care.

If a member ends up needing more advanced care or a trip to the emergency room, PACE will pay for it.

For more information, visit [caloptima.org/en/Members/PACE.aspx](http://caloptima.org/en/Members/PACE.aspx) or call 714-468-1100.

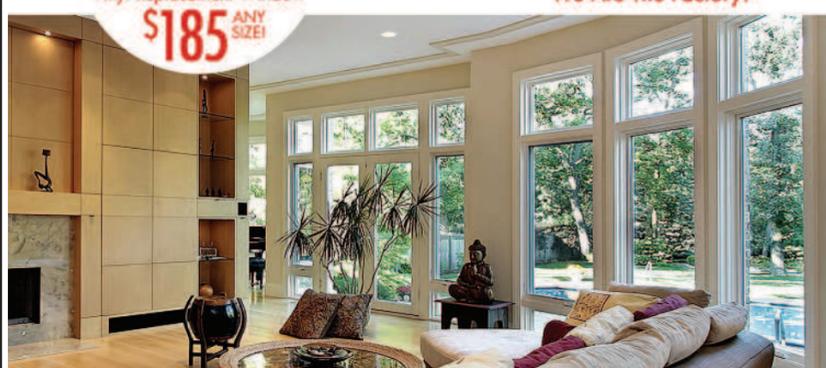
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