

## Most children with Santé HMO plans can be seen at Valley Children's Hospital

By Barbara Anderson

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The front entrance area of the main complex at Valley Children's Hospital in Madera County. Valley Children's and Sante Community Physicians have severed a 16-year contract relationship. The hospital announced Tuesday that most children who have been caught in the contract dispute between [Santé](#) and [Valley Children's Hospital](#) can continue going to the hospital and to doctors who work there.

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Most children who have been caught in a [contract dispute](#) between [Santé Community Physicians](#) and [Valley Children's Hospital](#) can continue going to the hospital and to doctors who work there, a hospital spokeswoman said Tuesday.

The hospital and [Specialty Medical Group Central California](#) have arrangements with three insurance companies — [Anthem Blue Cross](#), [Blue Shield](#) and [United Healthcare](#) — to see children who have HMO health plans through Santé, said Valley Children's spokeswoman Zara Arboleda.

The hospital and Specialty Medical Group are in negotiations with several other insurance companies, Arboleda said, but the deals with Anthem, Blue Shield and United Healthcare cover about 90% of the children who have plans with Santé, she said.

The deals avert a Thursday deadline that threatened to cut off children from care at the hospital. Specialty Medical Group and Valley Children's Hospital said in October that they were ending contracts with Santé, the largest doctors' group in Fresno with about 1,200 physicians and other health providers. Specialty Medical Group said it would no longer see Santé patients after Thursday.

On Monday, Dr. Daniel Bluestone, Santé's medical director, said he was confident children would be seen. "We've conferred with each of the health plans and they've conferred with the hospital and there is a mechanism in place where kids who really need care at Children's can get it."

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