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Eight-year Palomar Hotel resident Ruth Gray moves belongings into Garden Senior Residence Friday. She has lived in several places since quake.

Nursing home begins new life

Shut-down Garden Hospital refurbished to house older quake victims

By GUY LASNIER Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The first of up to 27 seniors displaced by the earthquake began moving into a refurbished nursing home Friday, in a program organized by a variety of federal, state, local and private groups.

The Garden Senior Residence on Ocean Street will provide temporary housing for up to 27 seniors in 24 rooms. The residence used to be the Garden Convalescent Hospital until it closed in the fall after state authorities suspended its license to operate.

Ruth Gray, one of six new residents who took part in an open house Friday, said she loved her new home. "It's so clean," said the 85-year-old retired

nurse. Grav lived at the Palomar Hotel for eight years until Oct. 17.

The home is managed by the Long-Term Care Division of Food and Nutrition Services under a contract with the county Health Services Agency. The county has leased the building from its owner. The Federal Emergency Management Agency pays the county \$1,000 a month for each resident, accoring to HSA director Eli Hall.

The building was cleaned and made ready for its new residents over the past few weeks while contractual details were worked out.

"It was whipped into shape in a relatively short periord of time," said Vince Scura, manager of FEMA's Santa Cruz housing office.

Residents are selected through the FEMA disaster centers, Scura said. Nursing care is not provided, but cleaning and linens are. The residents may come and go as they please. Transportation will be provided.

FEMA is paying the rent, but it will not pay for food. Residents may use the Louden Nelson senior dining center, and Meals on Wheels will provide service, said Larry Eachus of Food and Nutrition Services. He said a kitchen at the facility is being upgraded.

Hall said the county convinced the state to suspend rather than revoke the license for the former nursing home. She hopes the Garden Senior Center will be converted back into a skilled nursing home when the need for temporary housing ends. FEMA will provide funds for up to 18 months after the earthquake.