

Insurers Balk at Amgen's Price

BIOTECH: Repatha costs \$14,500 a year for life, but is it worth it?

By **STEPHANIE HENKEL** Staff Reporter

While health researchers report that **Amgen Inc.**'s cholesterol medication **Repatha** reduces the risk of heart disease, economic investigators find that insurers don't want to pay the steep price for the first-in-its-class drug.



Expensive Package: Repatha dosage

Thousand Oaks-based Amgen's Repatha is one of a new class of pharmaceuticals called PCSK9 inhibitors that work by reducing LDL or "bad" cholesterol. But since its launch in August 2015, Repatha's adoption rate has had a slow start as insurers are reluctant to pay \$14,500 a year for a drug that patients must take for life.

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Wage Dilemma

NONPROFITS: Disabled programs hurt by higher minimum pay.

By **HELEN FLOERSH** Staff Reporter

Once destined to life in institutions, many of the 280,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disorders living in California work alongside "neurotypical" individuals as employees at post offices, grocery stores and other businesses. But the model of care that made this possible faces a new challenge in the gap between state and local minimum wages.

"Anyone residing in California who has a developmental disability is entitled to care, which is a good thing," **George Stevens**, executive director of the **North Los Angeles County Regional Center**, said. "But we're stretched economically."

The center is an independent, nonprofit organization in Chatsworth that provides case management services for persons with disabilities in the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and Antelope valleys. It is one of 21 so-called "regional centers" designated as official points of entry into California's service system for residents with developmental disabilities, who are guaranteed lifelong care by the

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Artsy Entrepreneurs Flock to Former Pack House

REAL ESTATE: Fillmore building has space for crafty tenants.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

As **David Storrs** walks through the century-old former citrus packing plant that he owns in Fillmore, he talks about his instructions to workmen who restored the wooden floors.

He wanted the floors to be imperfect, to re-

tain a distressed look.

"I want to give the feeling that the building has been lived in," Storrs said.

The **Citrus Packing House** at the corner of A Street and Sespe Avenue in the small Ventura County city certainly has the vibe of a long life. The oldest part of the building was constructed in 1914. The new wing was added in 1935. It started out as a facility to pack oranges and lemons from the nearby orchards; later, the space



PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Landlord: David Storrs likes retro vibe.

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Cleared: Tim Prero of Pegasus Elite Aviation in firm's hangar.

JET-SET ENHANCEMENT

Leaseholders upgrade Van Nuys Airport, the Valley's \$2 billion asset

By **CAROL LAWRENCE** Staff Reporter

As the turbulence of the Great Recession fades, private and corporate jet ownership has emerged as a viable means of travel, making Van Nuys Airport an extremely valuable location in the middle of the Valley.

One of the busiest general aviation airfields in the country, Van Nuys has an economic impact of \$2 billion, according to a recent study by the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.** Moreover, it has become a hub of construction. But given the scarce land adjacent to the runway, competition has

become fierce to lease land at the publicly owned airport.

"The airport is full of tenants," said **Tim Prero**, co-owner of charter service **Pegasus Elite Aviation Inc.**, which is moving to a larger facility. "There's not enough hangars for individuals with aircraft."

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PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

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