

November 11, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request to Include New Investments in Home Based Care in 2022-2023 Budget

Dear Governor Newsom,

The undersigned members of the Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee write to request that you include, at a minimum, \$2.5 billion in investments in California's home and community-based services (HCBS) programs in your 2022-2023 January Budget Proposal.

Through your development and implementation of the Master Plan for Aging, you have demonstrated incredible leadership and a vision for meeting the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia, and their caregivers. We have an opportunity now to go even further – building off the lessons learned from COVID to address longstanding inequities in our systems of caring for older adults and people with disabilities.

The Need

As you know, COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact older adults - particularly older adults from Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities. The pandemic revealed and exacerbated the challenges facing our system of care: lack of access to care that helps people remain at home, financial incentives that force people into institutions, care that is too expensive to be in reach for most families, lack of support for family caregivers, an underpaid workforce, a lack of infrastructure for HCBS programs, and more. While COVID shined a harsh light on these shortcomings, it also provided an unparalleled opportunity to build a California where everyone can age with dignity and independence.

The state has made tremendous strides in reforming our service delivery system since the beginning of the pandemic. We are grateful for the resilient leadership you have shown in launching a comprehensive Master Plan for Aging that is rooted in equity for California's growing and diverse population of older adults and people with disabilities. The investments reflected in the 2021-22 Budget and

proposed HCBS Spending Plan advance the goals of the Master Plan and underscore the state's collective commitment to addressing longstanding system challenges in a fair, equitable, and just way.

We still have a lot of work to do. Today, we have an opportunity to accelerate and build further a strong system of support for older adults and people with disabilities. With new resources made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework and the pending Build Back Better proposal, we foresee a once-in-a-lifetime prospect for sweeping system change.

The attached proposal calls for at least \$2.5 billion in investments in HCBS, housing, transportation, and our caregiving workforce so that we can provide more Californian's the opportunity to get the care they need at home. The proposal outlines numerous policies that will create a California that embraces the gift of a diverse and growing populations of older adults and people with disabilities representing many races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and languages. This is what makes us rich as a state: people with vast life experience who contribute greatly to the fabric of our society.

Priorities

Each of the 16 proposals outlined in the attached document will be critical to addressing access, affordability, and navigation – but we believe these following four proposals are the cornerstone of wholesale system change.

- **Home and Community-Based Services as a Right: The California Community CHOICES HCBS State Plan Benefit.** As outlined, this proposal establishes a Home and Community Based Services Medi-Cal State Plan Benefit for older adults and people with disabilities. This bold proposal will help realize the vision for equitable and coordinated access to HCBS, in line with CalAIM.
- **Building the HCBS Infrastructure: A Core HCBS Service Mix Across California.** Equitable access to HCBS will require significant planning and infrastructure development to enable HCBS to be offered on a statewide basis.
- **Housing as a Right: The Older Adult and People with Disabilities Rental Assistance Program.** This program will enable approximately 25,000 at risk older adults and people with disabilities to access housing today.
- **Affordability: Fighting Poverty and Expanding Access by Reforming Medi-Cal Share of Cost.** This proposal will help hundreds of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities afford Medi-Cal and avoid impoverishment in accessing LTSS.

Workforce

We recognize that the workforce shortage is an immediate crisis impacting all service sectors, including health care and LTSS and, most notably, the direct care workforce. While we did not develop additional proposals for consideration to address the paid workforce needs, we are hopeful that the investments included in the 2021-22 Budget and proposed HCBS Spending Plan will yield great results in addressing this issue. Ultimately, our direct care workforce will be well-served by better pay with a living wage and benefits. We look forward to partnering with the administration on this issue in the months ahead.

Thank you for considering these proposals and we stand ready to work as partners in realizing the goals of the Master Plan for Aging.

Sincerely,

Maya Altman
Health Plan of San Mateo

Jan Arbuckle
Vice Mayor City of Grass Valley

Donna Benton, PhD
Association of Caregiver Resource
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Janny Castillo
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Coalition for Compassionate Care of
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Heather M. Young

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United Domestic Workers

cc: Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Marko Mijic, Deputy Secretary, California Health and Human Services
Agency