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Disability Rights California

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Alzheimer's | ORANGE COUNTY

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES
CAHF

HealthPlan OF SAN MATEO
Healthy is for everyone

Center for Independent Living
Access for All

CALIFORNIA COLLABORATIVE FOR COLTSS
CONCERNED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

ARCHSTONE FOUNDATION

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ILRC
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California Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Las Vegas

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

PIRS

January 19th, 2024

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

Senate President pro Tempore Designee
Senator Mike McGuire
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Assembly Speaker
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President Pro Tempore
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Aging and Disability Stakeholders' Response to Proposed 2024-25 State Budget

Dear Governor Newsom, Speaker Rivas, Pro Tem Atkins, Senator McGuire, Assemblymember Gabriel and Senator Skinner:

The undersigned 46 organizations representing aging and disability stakeholders in California, write to you with our comments on Governor Newsom's proposed 2024-25 state budget. Despite the state's fiscal downturn, we are appreciative that the proposed budget continues to invest in implementing the Master Plan for

Aging (MPA) to remedy longstanding inequities in the systems of care for older adults and people with disabilities. The MPA was created as a roadmap to guide state investments during times of surplus as well as fiscal downturns. California's MPA serves as a model for the nation on how to plan for an aging population and invest in, and advance the programs that serve older adults and people with disabilities. This budget allows California to remain a leader for the nation on aging issues.

We appreciate the continued commitment in this budget proposal to improving the lives of older adults and people with disabilities. In previous cycles of fiscal downturn, the first cuts were often made to home and community-based services, long-term services and supports, caregiver resource centers, and other safety net programs that millions of older adults in California rely on, and we are grateful that no such cuts are being suggested.

Health and Economic Security

We are particularly grateful that the proposed budget maintains specific investments in older adults and people with disabilities made in prior budgets, including: elimination of the asset test in Medi-Cal, expanding Medi-Cal coverage regardless of immigration status, and increasing the grant level for SSI/SSP. We are also encouraged that the Administration plans to continue implementing the Medi-Cal transitional rent proposal, as well as making some increases to slots in the Assisted Living Waiver and the Home and Community-Based Alternatives Waiver. We urge that the previous commitment to reform the Medi-Cal share of cost program be implemented on-time beginning January 1, 2025.

Housing and Homelessness

A core tenet of the MPA is ending and preventing older adult homelessness. California has experienced an alarming spike in older adult housing precarity and homelessness; almost half of unhoused adults are now age 50 and older, a number that continues to grow. While we applaud the Governor for maintaining many commitments to homelessness and behavioral health housing and services, there could not be a worse time to cut funding to programs that specifically target the housing needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Specifically, we request that the budget maintain the prior year funding commitments for the Home Safe and Housing and Disability Advocacy Programs. We also have grave concerns about the significant cuts in the proposed budget related to housing production. Older and disabled renter households are more likely to live on low,

fixed incomes and are disproportionately affected by the inadequate supply of affordable housing. We request that the budget maintain the prior year funding commitments for the Multifamily Housing Program, Infill Infrastructure Grant Program, Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, all of which are key funding sources to continuing to build housing serving low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

Home Care System for All

Even with the current budget deficit, we see numerous opportunities to continue to work with the Administration and Legislature to continue to build a home care system for all in California. The ongoing work to develop the Home and Community-Based Services gap analysis and roadmap, as well as the LTSS Financing and Affordability Policy and Research Initiative, is critical to creating an affordable and equitable system that works for older Californians and people with disabilities. We continue to hear from our communities that the lack of a universal LTSS system is putting more and more strain on families across the state. As our population ages, we stand ready to partner with the Administration and Legislature to meet this challenge.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of continuing to invest in the state's MPA. We are particularly appreciative to the steadfast work of the California Department of Aging, who has worked tirelessly with stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation of the MPA to bring the vision to a reality. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Administration and Legislature on building a home care system for all, ending older adult homelessness and poverty, and advancing equity for older adults.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer's Los Angeles
Alzheimer's Orange County
Archstone Foundation
Bet Tzedek Legal Services
CALIF-ILC
California Alliance for Retired
Americans
California Association of Area
Agencies on Aging

California Association of Health
Facilities (CAHF)
California Caregiver Resource
Centers
California Coalition on Family
Caregiving
California Collaborative for Long-
Term Services and Supports (CCLTSS)
California Commission on Aging
California Elder Justice Coalition

California Foundation for
Independent Living Centers
California Senior Legislature
California State Council on
Developmental Disabilities
California Women's Law Center
Californians for Disability Rights Inc
CalPACE
Cardea Health
Caring Across Generations
Choice in Aging
Disability Rights California
ElderHelp of San Diego
Health Plan of San Mateo
Homebridge Inc.
I Did Something Good Today
Foundation

Independent Living Resource
Center, Inc
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Justice in Aging
LeadingAge California
Legal Assistance for Seniors
LifeLong Medical Care
Maternal and Child Health Access
Placer Independent Resource
Services
San Diego Senior Alliance
Senior Advocacy Network
Senior Services Coalition of Alameda
County
The Center for Independent Living,
Inc.
West Health
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Cc: Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services Agency
Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging
Michelle Baass, Director, California Department of Health Care Services
Kim Johnson, Director, California Department of Social Services
Joe Stephenshaw, Director, California Department of Finance
Senator Caroline Menjivar, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3
Assemblymember Dr. Akilah Weber, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee # 1
Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2
Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Kim McCoy Wade, Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer's, Office of
Governor Gavin Newsom
Marjorie Swartz, Policy Consultant, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget Committee
Elizabeth Schmitt, Committee Consultant, Senate Budget Committee
Rosielyn Pulmano, Policy Consultant, Speaker Robert Rivas
Elizabeth Fuller, Chief Consultant, Assembly Aging and Long Term Care
Committee
Nicole Vasquez, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Andrea Margolis, Committee Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee