

February 5, 2024

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
California State Capital
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the California Commission on Aging, thank you for your dedication and commitment to protecting investments in programs and crucial safety net initiatives for older adults. The Commission noticed that your budget reflected a clear desire to keep cuts away, instead opting for delays.

We are particularly grateful for your ongoing commitment to fund and expand programs outlined in the California Master Plan for Aging. Your leadership in this area is advancing quality of life issues impacting not just the older adults in our state but also our nation. Twenty other states are following the path your administration forged as they are drafting or implementing their own Master Plan for Aging.

Your support for promoting housing programs is commendable. Housing insecurity and homelessness of older adults continue to be a priority for CCoA. In May 2023, the Commission sponsored a forum: "Aging in Community: The Affordable Housing Crisis that No One is Talking About" and will publish a white paper on Housing and Older Adults in the coming weeks.

We are eager to see the optimization of the [Home Safe Program](#) and [Housing and Disability Advocacy Program \(HDAP\)](#), so it was disappointing to learn of the delays. Yet, we recognize that delays are a much better alternative than potential cuts.

Housing is a human need, especially for the state's most frail individuals: those residing in Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs). Implementing the [Community Care Expansion \(CCE\) program](#) exemplifies your administration's commitment to stabilizing RCFEs. The availability of affordable quality care, provided in the most



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

homelike setting, contributes to our older adult population's overall well-being and dignity. Since signed into law in 2021, the CCE program, housed within the California Department of Social Services, has gone from concept to implementation. The CCE program has made \$570 million available, injecting capital into assisted living facilities that serve lower-income older adults. CCE preservation funds have covered the operational debts of RCFEs susceptible to closure – strengthening their financial viability to care for their residents.

Ongoing funding for CCE was not included in your budget, as the creation of CCE only appropriated two years of funding, and applications for these funds have now closed. We understand the challenges associated with budget allocations and fiscal responsibilities. However, in 2030, just six short years, the oldest baby boomers will turn 85, when many utilize the most long-term care services. Further investment in CCE while staying the course for total Home Safe and HDAP funding in this year's budget will yield substantial long-term benefits. The resulting impact on the lives of many vulnerable older adults will delay or eliminate the need for the high-cost alternative of skilled nursing custodial care, paid for by the Medi-Cal program.

We appreciate the difficult decisions you must make in crafting the budget, and we are grateful for your prioritization of programs that positively impact the lives of our aging population. Investments today in improving and expanding programs that work will set us on a financially sustainable system of care with fully resourced safety net programs.

The Commission stands ready to partner with your administration, agencies, and departments. We look forward to your continued leadership and support for the welfare of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those who love and care for them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Brown".

Cheryl Brown,
Chair, CA Commission on Aging

Cc:
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

Kim McCoy Wade, Senior Advisor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer's, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Susan DeMarios, Director, California Department of Aging

Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services Agency

Michelle Baass, Director, California Department of Health Care Services

Joe Stephenshaw, Director, California Department of Finance

Senator Toni Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore

Senator Mike McGuire, Senate Majority Leader

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair Senate Budget Committee

Senator Caroline Menjivar, Chair Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 Health & Human Services

Senator Susan Eggman, Chair of Health Committee

Senator Scott Wiener, Chair of Housing Committee

Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil, Chair of Human Services Committee

Assemblymember Robert Rivas, Speaker of the Assembly

Assemblymember Jim Wood, Speaker pro Tempore

Assemblymember James Gallagher, Republican Leader

Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Bains, Chair, Assembly Aging & Long-Term Care

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Assemblymember M.D. Akilah Weber, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 Health

Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2 Human Services

Assemblymember Mia Bonta, Chair, Assembly Health Committee

Assemblymember Alex Lee, Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee

Assemblymember Christopher Ward, Chair, Assembly Housing Committee

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