

**CCoA**  
California Commission on Aging

# AGEWATCH

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## Watch Parties and Online Access to bring next week's White House Conference on Aging to all

With less than a week to go to the 2015 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) on July 13, enthusiasm is building. This White House Conference promises to be an extraordinary event, with watch parties participating from homes, community centers, and libraries in every state. Conference planners hope that seniors, service providers and policy makers are planning to get involved by watching the livestream and engaging online as the President and other senior Administration officials headline this once-a-decade forum.

The White House Conference on Aging is working with older adults, families, caregivers, advocates, community leaders, and experts in the aging field to hold Watch Parties across the country to make this the largest White House Conference on Aging to date. WHCoA officials plan to make the day interactive and engaging for those tuning in online.

Nora Super, Executive Director of the 2015 WHCoA, encourages all organizations hosting events—whether public or private—to register their Watch Party [here](#). By registering, Watch Party hosts will receive the latest information about the July 13 Conference and a rundown of the best ways to submit your questions, comments and stories. Public watch parties will be posted on the Conference website once confirmed. Already, more than 85 public Watch Parties have been organized.

Next Monday's WHCoA will run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. EST (**7:00 a.m. - 11:00, PST**), with an early appearance from President Obama, who is expected to announce executive orders outlining the his Administration's policy priorities on aging. Based on input received so far from the regional forums, policy briefs and dozens of webinars and events, the WHCoA will issue on conference day a set of policy recommendations from the Administration and legislative proposals, with the goal of forwarding policy recommendations and ideas to improve the lives of Americans as they age.

2015 WHITE HOUSE  
**CONFERENCE**  
on AGING

To watch the event on Monday, July 13, or to read more  
about the WHCoA and preparation for this year's event,  
Visit the WHCoA [website](#).



AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834.

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## Governor signs on-time State Budget with few increases for safety net programs

Last week's State Budget signing by Governor Jerry Brown brought some small victories for advocates for the aging and persons with disabilities, although nowhere near what advocates had hoped for given the state's improving economy.

The \$167.6 billion 2015-16 State Budget includes an additional \$3.8 million for the state's Caregiver Resource Centers (CRCs) and an additional \$2.4 million for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. The budget includes a \$5 per month increase in SSI/SSP benefits for the state's most disadvantaged seniors, the blind and persons with disabilities. The budget additionally restores the 7% reduction in IHSS service hours that were eliminated during the recession. The CRCs and the Ombudsman program are also among the many safety-net programs that suffered significant budget losses during the recession, yet the majority of programs will see no increases in the new fiscal year. Budget requests to restore recession-induced cuts to other home and community based services administered through the area agency on aging network went unheeded in the latest budget cycle.

This month the Legislature began work in a special session called by the Governor to address the final unresolved issue agreed to in budget negotiations: passage of a new managed care organization tax (MCO) structure that complies with federal law. The new, modified tax will affect all managed care organizations and will generate income that will enable the state to increase Medi-Cal provider reimbursement rates, which are currently among the lowest in the nation.

*Information from CDCAN Report (Jun 19 2015): Breaking News - Legislature passes revised budget bill reflecting budget deal and Governor's Press Release, June 24, 2015, Governor Brown Signs 2015-2016 State Budget.*

## Federal Budget Proposals Raise Concerns of Aging Advocates

The House and Senate funding committees each passed spending bills in late June that propose a variety of cuts to critical health and social service programs serving older adults and persons with disabilities.

Along with continuing the 2011 sequester cuts, both chambers propose major reductions to Aging and Disability Resource Center funding. While the House budget proposes primarily level funding and a few increases for most OAA programs, the Senate's more aggressive bill would cut spending for the Senior Community Employment Program, Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Elder Falls Prevention, Title VI aging programs for Native Americans and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program.

According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, the House bill would also eliminate all remaining funding for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation with CMA, a center created under the ACA designed to improve healthcare delivery and payment systems in order to reduce overall spending. Both the House and Senate budgets would eliminate funding to fight fraud and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, and disability programs.

The proposed aging program budgets from both houses of Congress fell well below the President's '15-16 FY request. To view the National Council on Aging's chart of proposed aging funding levels, [click here](#). Information from NCOA – Federal Budget – protecting programs that improve the lives of seniors, <https://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/federal-budget/> and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, *Congressional Budget Roundup 2015: Everything You Need to Know About the House and Senate Budget Plans* <http://www.cbpp.org/blog/congressional-budget-roundup-2015-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-house-and-senate-budget>

## Law Allowing Nursing Homes to Make Patient Care Decisions Ruled Unconstitutional

A California law allowing nursing homes to make medical decisions on behalf of certain mentally incompetent residents was found unconstitutional in late June. The law, which has been in effect more than 20 years, gave nursing homes authority to decide residents' medical treatment if a doctor determined they were unable to do so and they had no one to represent them.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Evelio M. Grillo wrote in the June 24 decision that the law violates patients' due process rights because it doesn't require nursing homes to notify patients they have been deemed incapacitated or to give them the chance to object. Grillo acknowledged the decision is likely to "create problems" in how nursing home operate but wrote that patients' rights are more compelling.

"The stakes are simply too high to hold otherwise," the judge wrote. Any error could deprive patients of their rights to make medical decisions that "may result in significant consequences, including death." The medical decisions on incapacitated residents without representatives are made by a team that includes a physician and a nurse.

The fact that nursing homes are making end-of-life decisions without patient input is a big concern, according to the ruling. The decision cited one nursing home resident who was found to be mentally incapacitated and who had no representative. The facility staff made a decision to take him off life-sustaining treatment and he passed away in 2013.

The ruling came after the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, an advocacy group, filed a lawsuit in 2013 against the state Department of Public Health. The suit alleged that nursing homes used the law to administer anti-psychotic drugs, place residents in physical restraints and deny patients life-sustaining treatment. To read the full story, visit [Kaiser Health News](#).

Reprinted in part from :Anna Gorman, Kaiser Health News, June 26, 2015. *Judge Strikes California Law That Allowed Nursing Homes To Make Medical Decisions For Mentally Incompetent Residents.*

## CCoA Visits PACE Center

Members of the California Commission on Aging toured St. Paul's PACE in Chula Vista in June. Part of the Commission's regular meeting agenda, the group visited the state-of-the-art center, one of the state's 30 Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.

Pictured at right (back row, from left,) are Commissioners Stuart Greenbaum, Rita Saenz, Steve Castle, Carmen Reyes, Paul Downey, Bob Petty, Gail Nickerson, Julie Conger, staff member Carol Sewell, and (front row) Commissioners Jane Rozanski, Lucy Fisher, Ed Walsh, Donna Benton, Marian Last, Jean Schuldberg, Barbara Mitchell and staff members Sandi Fitzpatrick & Marcella Villanueva.



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## Aging Advocates Celebrate 25 Years of the Americans With Disabilities Act

The Americans With Disabilities Act turns 25 this month, and advocates for persons with disabilities and the aged have cause to celebrate.

In a new brief from Justice in Aging, titled *ADA at 25: Aging Advocates Celebrate Partnership and Progress*, the organization credits the ADA with lifting the lives of the disabled and setting in motion an advocacy model that is an example for other defenders of vulnerable populations.

According to Justice in Aging, "This celebratory time offers an opportunity to reflect on the ADA's history and its future potential. The disability community's unwavering commitment to the passage and implementation of the ADA continues to inspire aging advocates. As the health care delivery system becomes increasingly complex and the struggle for full community integration persists, partnership between the disability and aging advocacy community is more important than ever."

The brief highlights the importance of the ADA to the lives of older adults, and "outline(s) four key areas where the ADA continues to shape the environment, care, and services for older adults. As aging and disability advocates continue to partner to advance policy, it's important to remember how much the ADA accomplished in just twenty five years."

To learn more about Justice in Aging and read the brief, visit [Justice in Aging](#)

Excerpted from Katrina Cohen, Justice in Aging June 18, 2015 Issue Brief: *ADA at 25: Aging Advocates Celebrate Partnership and Progress*



## AGEWATCH

July 2015

### Upcoming Events

July 13, 2015 -- White House Conference on Aging. Washington DC (invitation only) for information or to watch the proceedings, visit <http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/>

July 27-29, 2015 -- American College of Preventative Medicine Healthy Aging Summit, Washington, DC, from **July 27-28**. Registration closes **Monday, July 13**. For registration and event details, visit [www.2015healthyagingsummit.org/](http://www.2015healthyagingsummit.org/).

August 11-12, 2015 -- Triple-A Council of California. Vagabond Inn, Sacramento. [www.4tacc.org](http://www.4tacc.org) for information.

September 17-18, 2015 -- California Commission on Aging, Hotel Diamond, Chico. [www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov) for information.

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