

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING****Office of the Director**

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July 25, 2023

The Honorable Pedro Nava, Chair  
Little Hoover Commission  
925 L Street, Suite 805  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ethan Rarick, Executive Director  
Little Hoover Commission  
925 L Street, Suite 805  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Nava and Commissioners:

Thank you for focusing on the [Master Plan for Aging](#) (MPA) – our state’s 10-year blueprint for the year 2030 when one in four Californians will be age 60 or older. I am excited to share the incredible progress that California has made since the Commission last examined this topic in 2010.

By now, you are familiar with the MPA’s five bold goals, 23 strategies, and more than 200 initiatives. I will focus my remarks on three key themes:

1. Leadership & Engagement
2. Prioritization & Accountability
3. Progress-to-Date & System Change

**Leadership & Engagement**

Aging is an issue that impacts all of us and as such, the MPA is a plan for Californians of all ages – whether a child being raised by a grandparent, a 30-year-old living with Down Syndrome, a 40-year-old adult daughter caring for a parent with Alzheimer’s, a 50-year-old facing retirement without savings, or the more typical view of someone age 60 or older. Without question, Governor Newsom’s [Executive Order](#) in June 2019 signaled to state government, the Legislature, and stakeholders that the population of older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers is a high priority. For the first time in our state’s history, the top executive called for a comprehensive aging plan with specific deliverables within a prescribed timeline. Ultimately, a Cabinet-level Workgroup was established and the position of Senior Advisor to the Governor on Aging, Disability and Alzheimer’s was created.

Today, the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly has primary responsibility for leading implementation of the MPA and I am honored, as Director of the California Department of Aging (CDA), to partner with and coordinate efforts across our sister departments and agencies in driving the MPA forward. We are fortunate to have the staff resources – made possible by the Governor and Legislature, to stand up the CDA Division of Policy, Research, & Equity where the MPA is housed. This Division is responsible for advancing the MPA across government and in partnership with stakeholders.

The real strength comes from the community and stakeholders who are working with and on behalf of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers to propel the MPA forward. In fact, it was stakeholders who first called for a plan, contributed thousands of volunteer hours to develop the MPA, and today steward the work in countless ways. We continuously engage with diverse stakeholders through [six standing advisory committees](#) addressing community living, elder and disability justice, equity, Alzheimer's, research, and oversight. We also hear directly from people with lived experience in other settings, such as the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, on which I serve, as well as the Behavioral Health Task Force, among others. Last year alone, CDA hosted 85 public webinars on topics related to the Master Plan's development and implementation.

Across the five bold goals, there are daunting challenges and system issues to address. We recognize preparing California for 2030 cannot all be accomplished in one year. Therefore, the MPA presents a broad framework to address the differing needs across the population. The five bold goals are fixed but the initiatives are flexible, allowing the work to iterate and evolve. For example, the [95 new MPA initiatives](#) released in January of this year include detailed recommendations in each of these areas, with work staged over time depending on the cost and complexity of the action.

The MPA is a whole-of-government approach to aging and disability. I want to acknowledge the critically important role that our Cabinet Secretaries and Department Directors play in developing initiatives, working with stakeholders, delivering results, and reporting on work as it is completed. There is tremendous ownership across Agencies, and enormous pride in the work.

### **Prioritization & Accountability**

The MPA is a comprehensive plan that extends well beyond traditional health and social services to housing, transportation, climate change, parks, volunteerism, and more.

When we talk about a California for All, it means all races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, geographies, incomes, ages, and abilities. We are confident the five bold MPA goals capture the highest priorities for all Californians, while recognizing there is no "one size fits all" – for example, transportation in Siskiyou County is far different than in San Francisco; access to health care for a California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) pension holder in Sacramento is not the same for an aging farmworker in Calexico; and for older members of the LGBTQ+ community, data indicates there are far fewer informal family supports in their later years. Our community is clear; we need to prioritize older adult homelessness, home and community care, behavioral health, caregiver supports, and equity. We believe our initiatives help get us closer to where we need to be to address these critical issues in preparation for 2030.

With respect to accountability, I would like to highlight five areas that increase the transparency of the work we do: 1) [Annual Report to the Legislature](#), 2) [MPA Initiative Implementation Tracker](#), 3) [MPA IMPACT Committee](#), 4) [Data Dashboard for Aging](#), and 5) Key Outcome Measures under development by our California Aging and Disability

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Research Partnership. To date, we have produced two annual reports, both available to the public online; we launched a publicly accessible online initiative tracker; we welcome the oversight of the Implementing the MPA in CA Together (IMPACT) Advisory Committee, including their objective report on our work each spring; we continue to expand and refine the data dashboard to meet public requests; and we are finalizing our first outcome measures across housing/homelessness/transportation, behavioral health, and paid and unpaid caregiving. Ultimately, these key outcomes will drive targeted efforts with explicit timelines and keep our team, and our state departments, accountable for the work we do.

### **Progress-to-Date & System Change**

I am proud to report that progress has been made on all five bold goal areas, and we also recognize that our work has just begun. In close partnership with the Legislature, we can point to [chaptered legislation](#) and record budget investments since the MPA was launched in 2021. I will note three significant outcomes: 1) expansion of Medi-Cal coverage to all undocumented Californians aged 50 and older and elimination of the Medi-Cal asset test; 2) well over \$1 billion in direct care workforce investments, including training and stipends; and 3) Community Care Expansion, bringing nearly \$1 billion to communities to acquire, construct, and/or rehabilitate adult and senior housing facilities serving low-income residents.

As the Governor said, “this plan is intended to be a living document for years to come.” Mid-way through year three, we have tremendous work ahead to build a home and community care system that works for all Californians.

With strong leadership, stakeholder engagement, and continued investment, California is well-positioned to deliver on the promise of the Master Plan for Aging, “to ensure all people in California are engaged, valued, and afforded equitable opportunities to thrive as we go through different ages and stages of life.”

Sincerely,



Susan DeMarois  
Director

Cc: Dr. Mark Ghaly, CalHHS Agency Secretary  
Kim McCoy Wade, Senior Advisor, Governor Gavin Newsom