

## **AAA Advisory Council, PSA 17 Hubs & Spokes for Aging & Disability Network Public Comment**

You will find listed below the comments from the AAA Advisory Council, PSA 17:

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Council for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties is taking this opportunity to comment on the Department's proposal to redesign the Area Agency on Aging network in California. Our comments and questions are based on our local experiences and what we know works for the combined counties.

Since 1975, the Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens has served as the AAA for these two counties. During this time, the AAA has dynamically adjusted to changing conditions, such as declining budgets and new restrictions, priorities and requirements. We have successfully moved forward in cooperation with our local networks to develop and sustain programs and services vital to the health and safety of older persons and family caregivers.

Our AAA Advisory Council supports the Master Plan on Aging (MPA), in general. We have never wavered from the mission set out in both the Older Americans and Californians Acts and our local Agency. Fortunately, the two counties and the State of California, unlike other Plan documents over the years, has a positive economy that will assist to implement some of the priorities identified. Our AAA Advisory Council was surprised to learn that major State stakeholders believe a new framework for the development and implementation of service enhancements was needed.

This AAA Advisory Council has reviewed the available information from the Department's website, MPA, and Townhalls. Our current comments and questions are:

Insufficient information is available to ensure that the two other scenarios will result in a better coordinated and comprehensive system of care services for older adults and family caregivers;

Concern that when the AAA is placed in large County departments the focus on aging may be lost or reduced;

Will there be any requirements to the new AAA's for a maintenance of effort regarding service expansion or care coordination?

With the proposal to eliminate this AAA and replace with two County-based AAA's, what assurance will be provided that the additional administrative costs will not diminish funding for services?

The AAA Advisory Council is accustomed to serving as an independent advocate. What will be the impact on the AAA Advocacy role when the Area Agency on Aging is in county government?

This AAA recognizes that improvements in our local systems are needed. That will always be the situation. Please consider that the current 33 AAA's with guidance/standards and adequate funding can achieve the goals of the proposed Hub and Spokes model. Many, if not all the current AAA's have the experience working with other local agencies to move toward a good next level of service, additional resources (personnel, funding, etc.) will be required.

Thank you for the opportunity to address our comments and concerns.

Barr Jay Marks, Chair

AAA Advisory Council, PSA 17

Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens