



For Immediate Release

Date

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Californians Rank Abuse Prevention Top Priority for Master Plan for Aging

In June, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an Executive Order to develop a California Master Plan for Aging that will serve as a blueprint for state and local government, the private sector, and philanthropists to “build an age-friendly state so that all Californians can age with dignity and independence.”

A new poll that asked 1000 California voters to weigh in on the initiative revealed that an overwhelming majority (76.2%) support the plan with seven out of ten saying that the state should be held accountable for investing in and implementing it. When asked their priorities, **73.6% identified elder abuse prevention among their top priorities, with 34% ranking it first, more than any other single issue.**

The poll was conducted for We Stand With Seniors, a public awareness campaign co-founded by two nonprofits, West Health and The SCAN Foundation. The researchers surveyed 1000 Californian voters by phone in July, 2019 using live, professional interviewers, who conducted interviews in Spanish and English using mobile and land-lines.

CEJC Calls for Spotlighting Elder Justice

The California Elder Justice Coalition (CEJC), a network of 85 organizations, individuals, and coalitions, is urging policy makers to highlight the following goals:

1. Provide a "No Wrong Door" approach for reporting elder and dependent adult abuse with the assurance that all cases are investigated and responded to.
2. All adults have opportunities to complete advanced directives to protect their autonomy and personal choices.
3. Assure that individuals with cognitive impairments have supports and representation in decision making and in managing their care regardless of their place of residence (i.e. community or congregate settings).
4. Sound policy that protects all aging Californians with particular focus on those who are at highest risk of homelessness, neglect, poverty, disability, and abuse.

According to CEJC Executive Director Lisa Nerenberg, “We want to make sure that the plan safeguards older Californians’ rights and promotes equity. Individual rights range from protections against discrimination on the job and in housing and health care; to due process when conservatorship is proposed or public benefits are denied; to the right to live free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Equity includes fairness in access to the legal system and health and social services. It further requires taking steps to repair the harm caused by injustices experienced earlier in life that account for the glaring discrepancies in life expectancy, disability rates, and wealth among older adults.”

CEJC Vice-Chair Donna Benton, Director of the USC Family Caregiver Resource Center/LACRC, who was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Master Plan Advisory Committee, had this to say about the group’s first meeting:

The promise of this master plan for California residents is that it will spotlight how everyone can better prepare for their own aging with the support of state and local social, health and mental health services. We want to remove barriers to access for all those that want help. Moreover, for vulnerable adults it is vital that services help to reduce risk for all types of abuse in any setting that we may choose to live in as we get older. The right to a safe living environment was discussed often in the first meeting.

For more on the study, see [Findings](#) and a related [infographic](#).

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