



TO: The Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee
FROM: The Long-Term Services and Supports Subcommittee
DATE: May 26, 2020

To the Members of the Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Committee):

In early March, the Committee members unanimously adopted the final draft of the *Long-Term Services and Supports Subcommittee (LTSS) Stakeholder Report*, prepared in accordance with requirements outlined in Governor Newsom's [Executive Order](#) for the Master Plan for Aging. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the final report was not formally transmitted to the Committee nor to the Governor. Today, we are transmitting the final report that includes a preface providing commentary on the report's importance in light of the COVID-19 crisis as well as the drastic budget reductions proposed by the Administration.

We ask that the Committee formally transmit the report to the Governor without delay, urging California to commit to five bold statewide objectives, as further expanded upon in the body of the report.

- Objective 1: A system that all Californians can easily navigate
- Objective 2: Access to LTSS in every community
- Objective 3: Affordable LTSS choices
- Objective 4: Highly valued, high-quality workforce
- Objective 5: Streamlined state and local administrative structures

This report provides a broad vision for LTSS in California while making concrete recommendations that span all aspects of the LTSS system, with varying timelines for implementation. Some recommendations represent longer-term strategies, whereas others can be acted upon immediately.

While the report focuses on LTSS system issues, we recognize it is part of a much larger, interdependent system that includes health care, housing, transportation, public safety and workforce development, among others. As such, we call special attention to the need for strong gubernatorial-level leadership with dedicated staff to ensure a strong foundation for Master Plan implementation. This entails establishment of a cabinet-level position to elevate the importance of the Master Plan for Aging across all agencies and sectors. We encourage the Stakeholder Advisory Committee to advance this concept in its final recommendations to the Administration.

California can no longer afford to wait to address the pressing and long-neglected challenges facing older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers and families. We thank the Committee for advancing these critical issues on behalf of this population.

Preface | May 26, 2020

The Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Committee) unanimously approved the final draft of the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Subcommittee report in March 2020 - just before the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally altered California lives, disproportionately impacting older adults and people with disabilities while also creating a massive budget shortfall. Since that time, the COVID-19 crisis has dramatically revealed and exacerbated the shortcomings in California's LTSS system. We are deeply concerned that the state's response to the crisis has been to propose cuts and program eliminations that stand to decimate the system of services and supports that Californians rely on to remain in the community and maintain dignity and independence.

Instead of cuts to the critical programs and services in California's LTSS system, we ask that the Committee use the recommendations in this report to guide your thinking and approach. The response to the crisis should be driven by the values in the Master Plan and be forward-thinking about the future LTSS system.

The Master Plan for Aging should serve as the state's guardrails during challenging budgetary times, providing a lens from which to view any proposal for its impact on this population. Yet, what we see in the [May Revision](#) does not live up to the ideals outlined in the articulated [values and goals](#) of the Master Plan. In fact, all of the proposed cuts and eliminations negatively impact progress towards reaching each of these goals and contradict what is outlined in the Governor's [Executive Order](#).

In this report, the LTSS Subcommittee affirms the importance of equity in addressing the LTSS needs of older adults and people with disabilities, with specific recommendations to eliminate disparities and increase equity, accessibility, and affordability in the LTSS system. We continue to stand by these recommendations. Further, we recognize that the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare tremendous system inequities and health disparities that directly result in racial and ethnic populations being at disproportionate risk to contract, to be hospitalized and to die from COVID-19. It has also highlighted the widespread ageism and ableism that infiltrate societal views of older adults and people with disabilities and diminishes their value.

Despite the system's shortcomings, this crisis has demonstrated that California absolutely can rise to meet the challenge of transforming its LTSS system when leaders at the state and local levels work together and move with urgency towards a shared goal. While not perfect in its execution, the response to COVID-19 has unleashed the power of creative problem solving and a willingness to act expeditiously to ensure people have the services they need to stay safe and healthy.

The devastating impact COVID-19 has had on the state's fiscal outlook cannot dampen the urgency for creative thinking, bold planning and prompt action to transform California's LTSS system. This pandemic was preceded by an acute need to accelerate preparedness for the state's aging population and increased incidence of disability. Bold planning does not

require immediate resources, but it does require strong leadership that outlines a vision for what California's LTSS system should look like well beyond this moment to better meet the needs of all Californians.

It will take time to fully understand the COVID-19 crisis and its lessons, but it is clear today that the LTSS Subcommittee report offers many recommendations that are critically relevant now.

1. At the Gubernatorial level, there is need for coordinated, engaged leadership addressing issues impacting older adults and people with disabilities across all agencies.
2. In spite of efforts to temporarily expand access to health and social services information during COVID-19, ongoing challenges remain in how and where the public can learn about vital LTSS programs and services in the community.
3. The issues confronting both paid caregivers and unpaid family caregivers remain central to both the COVID-19 crisis and LTSS during ordinary times. This issue deserves focused attention with solutions identified in this report.
4. The shortcomings in licensed residential and skilled nursing care demand prompt scrutiny and systemic reform, with new models of care that prioritize funding, testing and support to further home and community-based living over institutional care.
5. COVID-19 has forever altered how services are delivered in the community, and LTSS programs have quickly demonstrated success using alternative methods. These innovative approaches should not be abandoned or limited to times of crisis and should enable more flexible, creative and person-centered approaches to meet people's needs for the longer-term.

At this critical juncture, it is incumbent upon all of us to seize this crisis as an opportunity to commit to equitable LTSS system reform and transformation because California's older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers deserve nothing less.