

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

California Task Force on Family Caregiving begins work to address caregiver needs

Protecting the health and well-being of family caregivers is the goal of the *California Task Force on Family Caregiving*, a newly-formed advisory body established through the efforts of State Assembly Member Cheryl Brown of San Bernardino.

Comprised of representatives from the fields of aging, caregiver supports, the Alzheimer's Association, academia, and family caregivers, the task force was created in 2015 with the passage of ACR 38.

The Task Force held its first meeting October 20 at the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology at the USC in Los Angeles. Home to the Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center, the Davis School will administer the Task Force under the leadership of Professor Kate Wilber. AARP California and the Archstone Foundation are funding the effort.

Members of the Task Force were appointed by the Legislature to research the challenges faced by family caregivers, review the current network of services and supports available to informal caregivers, identify opportunities to improve caregiver supports, and make policy recommendations to the Legislature. The task force will meet through June 2018, with a final report due to the Legislature July 1, 2018.

Information on the California Family Caregiver Task Force's work and meeting schedule are available at <http://tffc.usc.edu/>



Front row (L-R) Kathy Kelly (Family Caregiver Alliance), Carmen Estrada (Inland Caregiver Resource Center), Sandi Fitzpatrick (California Commission on Aging, Assemblymember Cheryl Brown, Anat Louis, (LA City Dept. of Aging,)), Edie Yau (Alzheimer's Association), and back row: Donna Benton (Davis School of Gerontology), Doug Moore (United Domestic Workers), Les Cohen (Orange County Ombudsman), and Eric Mercado (L.A. Magazine).



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. (916) 419-7591

www.ccoa.ca.gov

Medicare open enrollment period comes with fraud warnings

[California Health Advocates](#) issued warnings in October about new Medicare scams targeting older adults. With the Medicare open enrollment period in full swing through December 7th, enrollees are urged to stay informed and avoid Medicare fraudsters. Counselors from the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP at 1-800-434-0222) are available to answer questions and provide guidance on Medicare options.

Guard Your Medicare Card & Tips to Avoid Enrollment Scams ~ Available in 8 Languages

One simple way to protect yourself against fraud is to guard your Medicare number. Fraud schemes often depend on identity thieves getting hold of people's Medicare numbers, so treat your number as you would a credit card. This alert also warns of plan enrollment scams during Medicare's Open Enrollment and is available in English, Armenian, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

Beware of Postcards Advertising Free Braces to Relieve Pain

Be alert to urgently marked postcards notifying beneficiaries of pending eligibility for free back and/or knee Braces covered by Medicare. **This is a scam.** Medicare only covers such equipment if it is medically necessary and prescribed by a doctor. These scammers just want to get your Medicare number to bill for services/equipment you never receive, or equipment much more expensive than what you receive.

Printable copies of the Medicare fraud alerts are available in multiple languages by clicking [here](#).

Excerpted from *California Health Advocates* Medigap Legislation Could bring New Consumer Rights, 2017 Medicare Updates, New Fraud Alert & More, news@cahealthadvocates.org; October 24, 2016.

Recognizing the importance of family caregivers during *National Family Caregivers Month*

November is *National Family Caregivers Month*. The annual recognition is a time to celebrate the contributions of those friends and family members who freely give their time to support a loved one suffering from an illness or a disability. According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, "more than 44 million Americans care for a family member, friend, or neighbor."

In California, the San Francisco-based Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) provides information and resources for these informal caregivers, helping them find the supports and guidance they need to stay healthy while they care for an ailing loved one.



Printable [FCA Fact and Tip Sheets](#) in

multiple languages are available online, covering topics such as caring for yourself, palliative care, and community resources for caregivers. To access FCA's resources, visit www.caregiver.org.

In honor of National Family Caregivers Month, the AARP Public Policy Institute has issued the first major [research report](#) - *Family Caregivers & Managed Long-Term Services and Supports* - on family caregivers' needs within the emerging field of managed long-term services and supports (LTSS). The authors find that while family caregiver supports are still uncommon in managed LTSS, managed care contracts can lead the way in standardizing a person- and family-centered approach, resulting in better care for both members and their families.

Information from Family Caregiver Alliance, *November = National Family Caregivers Month*, October 28, 2016 and National Alliance for Caregiving, *National Family Caregivers Month 2016*, Wednesday, November 02, 2016

Working Together to Solve Older Adult Poverty

Solving the crisis of elder poverty in California will be the focus of an informational hearing hosted by the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) this month. Drawing on the findings from the *Aging, Women and Poverty in California* forum last June, the hearing will provide an opportunity for audience members to discuss issues, challenges and solutions to high poverty rates among older Californians.

Planned as part of the C4A Annual Conference in Los Angeles, the November 16 hearing will feature presentations from CCoA Chair Paul Downey, Bob Blancato from the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs, CCoA Commissioner Betsy Butler and experts from the fields of aging and community based services.

Working Together to Solve Older Adult Poverty
November 16, 2016
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Sheraton Gateway Hotel - Salon D
6101 West Century Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90045

For additional information, please contact the California Commission on Aging at ccoa@ccoa.ca.gov.



California leaders chosen among the 50 Influencers in Aging for 2016 by Next Avenue

Sixteen of California's leaders from the fields of aging, government, entertainment and academia are among the nation's 50 top "Influencers in Aging" chosen by the Public Broadcasting System's online publication [Next Avenue](#). According to the Next Avenue website, the "50 advocates, researchers, thought leaders, innovators, writers and experts continue to push beyond traditional boundaries and change our understanding of what it means to grow older." To see the full list of 2016 Influencers in Aging, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13, 2016 -- Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, *Embracing the Journey: End of Life Resource Fair*. [Www.jccsf.org/EOL](http://www.jccsf.org/EOL) for information and to register.

November 15 - 16, 2016 - California Commission on Aging. Crown Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. [Www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov) for information.

November 15 - 17, 2016 -- California Association of Area Agencies on Aging Annual Conference, Los Angeles. www.c4a.info for registration and information.

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AGEWATCH

A letter to California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León

The California Commission on Aging would like to request an indefinite extension of the Senate’s Select Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care. Given the upcoming departure of Select Committee Chair Carol Liu, we believe a champion must be identified quickly to continue the important work of this essential committee.

You are well aware of the impending demographic changes that will markedly alter the face of our state: by 2050, 25 percent of the state will be over 65 and the number living beyond age 85 will have increased by 61 percent. Demographic shifts within the older adult population will be evident as well: the number of older Latinos is expected to increase by 170 percent; older Asians by 118 percent, and African American elders by 96 percent.

Current data from UCLA’s center for health policy research shows that over 40 percent of older Californians are barely able to afford basic living expenses, yet are ineligible for safety net services. Economic insecurity is higher in communities of color, a fact that is likely to continue as the population expands.

For those living at or below the poverty rate, the very minimal supports available from the State and Federal governments do little to ease the lives of the elderly poor. Poverty rates among Californians over age 65 have grown in the past decade, with rates of Hispanic elderly in poverty nearly triple that of elderly whites and African American elderly in poverty more than double. Poverty is a factor in an individual’s health, their ability to participate in family and community life, and their impact on services, to say nothing of the inequity of a lifetime of hard work only to spend their final years without enough food or safe housing.

Regardless of ethnicity or economic standing, this expanding segment of California’s population will have an enormous impact on services affecting the state’s economy. These changes will require a strengthened response from the health and social service system – both public and private – that can be dealt with either in response to a crisis, or proactively as a thoughtfully planned build-out.

The work of the 2015-2016 Select Committee under Senator Liu’s leadership pointed out problems and solutions for many of these issues, but much of the heavy lifting remains to be done. Continued leadership from the State Senate is needed to help assure the state’s focus on the unique and growing needs of this population.

Sincerely,



Paul Downey, Chair
California Commission on Aging

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