

California

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Alzheimer's Association Joins Governor Newsom and Key Stakeholders in Release of California's First Master Plan for Aging

Promoting Early Detection, Timely Diagnosis and Care Planning a Top Priority

Sacramento, CA -- After nearly 18 months of intense focus and dedicated effort, Governor Gavin Newsom and his Administration today released a 10-year blueprint to guide planning, investment and action on behalf of people with disabilities and older adults, including the 2.3 million Californians currently impacted by Alzheimer's and all dementia. The Master Plan for Aging announced today integrates the groundbreaking work of the Governor's Alzheimer's Prevention and Preparedness Task Force led by former First Lady Maria Shriver.

The Alzheimer's Association was represented by State Policy Director Susan DeMarois on both of the Governor's initiatives. "It's been more than 30 years since California has seen this type of executive leadership on aging and Alzheimer's – three decades in which our state's aging population has grown significantly in size, diversity and complexity.," said DeMarois. "The Alzheimer's Association welcomes Governor Newsom's vision for *all* Californians; it's exactly what our state needs at this crucial moment."

Working alongside consumers and providers, the Alzheimer's Association advocated for key recommendations in the Master Plan for Aging to prepare California for a staggering 22 percent increase in the population affected by 2025. This plan will garner national attention as 5.8 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's – a disease projected to cost our country \$305 billion this year alone.

The Alzheimer's Association is encouraged by the unified, coordinated effort put forth today by the Governor and his cabinet. Due to the progressive, degenerative nature of Alzheimer's disease, individuals need a wide array of health care services and social supports over many years' time, including information and assistance, in-home care, family caregiver supports, adult day services, long-term care, and hospitalization. This plan addresses every level of the continuum across the lifespan.

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Importantly, the Newsom Administration puts equity at the center of the Master Plan. Black/African American and Latino Californians are disproportionately impacted by dementia facing higher prevalence rates, later diagnoses and poor health outcomes. Moreover, women bear the burden of this disease – almost 2/3 of all cases are female, women provide more than 60 percent of all informal family caregiving, and the vast majority of low paid, front-line direct care workers are women.

The statewide Alzheimer's Association, with 21 local offices throughout California, is committed to seeing this 10-year plan through in collaboration with the Newsom Administration, the Legislature and stakeholders. As a first step, the Association has prioritized early detection and timely diagnosis for all affected. Currently, less than half of people affected receive the benefit of an accurate diagnosis documented in the medical record. The Master Plan addresses this in goal area two: Health Reimagined under strategies D and E.

In partnership with State Senator Monique Limón, the Association is sponsoring Senate Bill 48 to require California physicians to update their knowledge of geriatrics and improve understanding of the unique needs of patients with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's and all dementia.

From DeMarois' perspective, an important emphasis of the Master Plan is combating ageism and inequity of our current healthcare system. She shares, "This is unacceptable in 2021. Who among us would agree that facing Alzheimer's -- a fatal disease -- without a doctor's diagnosis and plan of care is consistent with the values of the California we know and love?"

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

To learn more, visit www.alz.org or call our 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900

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