

Strengthening Voices and Driving Change at our 2018 LTSS Summit

Perspectives on Aging with Dignity • November 2018



Bruce Chernof, MD, President and CEO of The SCAN Foundation, dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. The Perspectives Series provides opinions and observations about transforming the way in which we age. Follow Dr. Bruce on Twitter [@DrBruce_TSF](https://twitter.com/DrBruce_TSF).

Each year as part of The SCAN Foundation's Summit on Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS), we gather thought leaders and advocates to develop a more informed voice on issues important to older Californians, persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and service providers. In this year, our [eighth annual Summit](#), we focused on strengthening advocacy in the quest for system change. In this particularly pivotal time for LTSS advocacy – the next California governor will be elected in less than a week – we must raise our collective voices.

We heard critical perspectives offered from influential leaders in the legislative, philanthropic, and communications fields who provided insight into how we can work together to continue our push for LTSS transformation. During his opening remarks, Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) acknowledged that California's older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers are struggling—struggling to finance their care and weave together a patchwork of necessary services in a system plagued by years of budget cuts. These system-wide challenges require thoughtful solutions and unified advocacy efforts. Richard Figueroa, Director of Prevention and Affordable Care Act at The California Endowment, provided insight into opportunities the gubernatorial transition brings to elevate these issues, including what questions to ask, how to engage, and how grand promises made during the campaign often translate into concrete strategies after the election.

As for promises, we heard directly from our two gubernatorial candidates – businessman John Cox and Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom – who both committed to developing a master plan for aging that meets the needs of older Californians and their families today and into the future. This is a significant step forward and if the promise is fulfilled, it will help prepare our state to meet the population’s needs. But as Kassy Perry, CEO of Perry Communications Group noted during her closing remarks, we have to hold the next governor accountable to their stated commitments. In doing so, we must work together, develop a sense of urgency, and help policymakers at the state and legislative levels see how our issues connect to those that resonate with them.

While the Summit provides a venue to explore local California policy, we recognize that we must also incorporate federal-level discussions. A morning session focused on the [CHRONIC Care Act](#), which encourages use of flexible new tools and strategies to better coordinate care for individuals with complex care needs. The law gives Medicare Advantage plans greater flexibility to cover non-medical benefits – such as bathroom grab bars and wheelchair ramps – for identified high-need, high-risk members. Summit attendees thought through processes for LTSS providers and insurers [working together](#) to overcome barriers in providing these new benefits.


We must also address the day-to-day concerns people face in navigating their systems of care. To that end, the day provided attendees with an exciting opportunity to preview [My Care, My Choice](#), a tool designed to help California’s dual eligibles better understand the care choices available in their communities and make the most of their health care coverage. The resource is also for anyone who helps people with both Medicare and Medi-Cal in making choices based on what matters most to them.

Since the first Summit in 2011, we have sought to fill an important niche in the state’s advocacy landscape—increasing the visibility of challenges faced by older Californians, in particular low-income individuals with complex care needs.

This year’s Summit has helped link voices together to learn, celebrate, challenge, reflect, plan, and ultimately grow as an advocacy community.



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