

# California LTSS Summit — What a Difference Six Years Can Make

Perspectives on Aging with Dignity • October 2016

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When The SCAN Foundation held its first California Summit on Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) in 2010, we hoped 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. Maybe there was something to those East Coast stereotypes about California—being too youth obsessed and too ethereal given that there are strong voices for environmental protection, K-12 education, and the arts yet limited visibility for aging. When the Foundation started, I met with many legislators on key committees of jurisdiction. I will never forget when a chair of one of those committees said to me, “Yes Bruce, I understand these issues are important, but really, no one ever comes to talk to me about them.” This comment was a revelation to me.

In response, we have gathered thought leaders and advocates in aging and LTSS to develop a more coherent, informed, and impactful voice on behalf of older Californians, persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and service providers. We are grateful for the solid work of the Sacramento-based California [Collaborative and the state-wide network of Regional Coalitions](#) that act at the county and city levels, representing 95 percent of the state’s population. The annual Summit has helped bridge all these voices together to learn, celebrate, challenge, reflect, plan, and ultimately grow as an advocacy community.

And what a difference six years makes. From that first Summit with just under 200 participants, this year’s enrollment nearly exceeded 400. I am hard pressed to think of another time where service providers, aging and disability advocacy groups, health plans, state officials from both the governor’s

Administration and the Legislature, academics researchers, and the media spend the day together under one roof, focused on key questions for living well in the face of chronic health conditions and daily living needs.

[This year's conference](#) was opened by Dr. Laura Mosqueda, challenging us to bring person-centered care to life. Person-centered care demands that an individual's goal and desires are central to the development of their plan of care, and by extension that quality is not measured just in medical terms but also through personal goal achievement. Attendees spent much of the day in hands-on sessions on a variety of topics, such as:

- California's Whole Person Care Pilot and Health Home Program;
- Fostering the role of care coordinators in integrated care models;
- Using social media to maximize engagement;
- Looking at the latest trends in long-term care financing and quality measurement; and
- Understanding what is working well in California's duals demonstration, and where there are opportunities for improvement.

This year's conference was brought to a close by Bob Blancato, who provided insights and context about the links between the political debates of 2016 and their impact on the policy agenda for 2017. He challenged all of us with key questions, such as:

- What will it take to bring LTSS to the forefront?
- What is our role – individually and collectively – to make that happen?

As I spent time talking with many participants, quietly ghosting in and out of the workshops, observing the lunchtime in-depth networking sessions (new this year!), I was struck by the sense of openness, a willingness to both talk and listen, and a shared desire to build better systems. Improving services and policy dialogue is not easy and will not happen overnight, yet it does happen when we work together. Six years and running, the Summit has proven an important meeting place to strengthen a shared voice for change that reaches toward better quality services at the most efficient cost.