

White House Conference on Aging



Bruce Chernof, MD
President and CEO

Developing a vision and strategy for the transformation of our system of long-term services and supports (LTSS) is imperative to better meet the current and future needs of older adults. Since 1961, the White House has held a Conference on Aging every decade to elevate issues facing older Americans and generate policy ideas to help improve the aging experience. The next conference will occur in 2015, and conference leadership is seeking stakeholder input.

Bruce Chernof, MD, is 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 SCAN Foundation Perspectives Series serves as a venue for opinions and observations about transforming the way in which we age.

At our recent [LTSS Summit](#), Nora Super, Executive Director of the White House Conference on Aging, presided over two listening sessions with California stakeholders. Attendees provided focused feedback, identifying their top LTSS priorities.

Twelve key themes emerged from more than 200 comments collected, ranging from elder justice to workforce development. Below are three that resonated most with the Foundation's current work toward a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs.

Care Coordination. Participants talked about how essential it is to integrate and coordinate services that address the needs of the whole person, including LTSS and behavioral health, as medical care alone will not necessarily produce good health outcomes for vulnerable older adults. Care coordination can help people access the right services at the right time and place. For example, care coordination can help ensure that the right supports are in place during a transition home after a hospitalization, or that an individual's LTSS and medical needs and goals are met to help support healthy living in the community. In the same vein, the success of care coordination is determined by the tools available, elevating the importance of a universal assessment and interoperable information technology for data

collection and sharing, as well as quality assurance. Building the supports and services around the needs of the person at the center of care is a start toward ensuring aging with dignity and independence.

Access to Home- and Community-Based Services. In addition to medical and LTSS services, older adults need access to affordable housing, nutrition, and transportation. An individual cannot transition out of a hospital or nursing facility if they do not have a home where they can safely remain. Without transportation, they can't attend their medical appointments and access to care is nonexistent. These social factors contribute to a person's health and well-being. We need to better identify people's social needs, and connect them to the appropriate services. Health systems coordinating care should partner with a robust array of community-based organizations to help people meet these essential needs.

Financing LTSS. Financing was a thread woven through every topic, with a focus on both public and private solutions. How do we fund services for people who cannot afford them and make LTSS more affordable for working families? We need to think about how to provide stable financing for people who have needs today, while creating new tools for working families to plan and pay for their future care needs.

Conference staff will engage in more listening sessions over the next several months. Stakeholders can weigh in by participating in future listening sessions and/or submitting comments online (see box below). Your contributions to the dialogue are key to transforming LTSS delivery and financing so that all Americans age with dignity, choice, and independence.

The White House Conference on Aging will address issues that fall under four common areas: retirement security, healthy aging, long-term services and supports, and elder justice. Interested stakeholders can provide input in two ways:

- 1. Visit the 2015 WHCOA website at <http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/> and share your thoughts and priorities about the issues facing older adults in America.*
- 2. There will be several opportunities for public input around the nation through listening sessions, public forums, etc. Sign up at the WHCOA website to receive information on activities near you.*