



CALIFORNIA COLLABORATIVE FOR LONG-TERM SERVICES & SUPPORTS (CCLTSS)

February 9, 2018

Hon. Joaquin Arambula, MD
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1 on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Hon. Richard Pan, MD
Senate Budget Subcommittee 3 on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Budget Proposal for Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Arambula and Senator Pan:

The California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports is comprised of 37 statewide aging and disability organizations that promote dignity and independence in long-term living. Our members include advocates, providers, labor and health insurers and collectively we represent millions of California seniors and people with disabilities, their caregivers and those who provide health, human services and housing.

We are writing in strong support of funding for California's Long-term Care Ombudsman programs.

The role of the Ombudsman program is to hold systems accountable to fulfill their responsibilities to residents. They identify, investigate and resolve complaints, provide information, represent the interests of residents, seek remedies to

protect them and analyze and comment on policies that impact the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents. Importantly, they perform these functions by taking direction from the resident, being the voice for residents, and respecting and advocating for resident choices. These approaches are the hallmarks of ensuring person-centered care.

In 2016, California's long-term care Ombudsmen programs conducted almost 70,000 unannounced visits to nursing homes and assisted living facilities. They investigated and resolved over 40,000 complaints, including complaints for elder abuse and neglect. They provided over 52,000 consultations to residents, gave nearly 14,000 consultations to facilities, and witnessed over 2300 Advanced Health Care Directive and property transfer declarations.

However, these essential services are not keeping pace with the needs of Californians in long-term care facilities. While the number of assisted living beds has increased by over 17,000 in the past ten years, the number of paid Ombudsman in California has decreased by 33 full-time equivalent staff. To offset reduced funding, resources have been re-directed from volunteer support activities to field activities to try to keep pace with investigative functions. This has diminished the program's capacity to recruit, train, coordinate and support volunteers – today there are 255 fewer volunteers working in Ombudsman programs than there were ten years ago.

Funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman would support vital quarterly unannounced visits to 8,842 long-term care facilities, investigation of 6,000 additional complaints, provide core support to small programs that struggle with sustainability, and invest in the capacity to recruit, train, support and retain volunteers. These investments would provide essential services for one of California's most vulnerable populations.

We respectfully ask for your support for this proposal.

Sincerely,



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For the California Collaborative
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cc: Hon. Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Hon. Jay Obernolte, Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Hon. Holly Mitchell, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Hon. Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Senate Budget Committee
The Hon. Members of Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
The Hon. Members of Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
Diana Dooley, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Michael Cohen, Director, Department of Finance
Lora Connolly, Director, Department of Aging
Hon. Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly
Hon. Brian Dahle, Assembly Republican Leader
Hon. Kevin de León, President pro Tempore, California State Senate
Hon. Patricia Bates, Senate Minority Leader