



## ADVOCACY IN A TIME OF CRISIS AND RECOVERY:

Highlights from the 2021 Senior Rally Day and  
California Collaborative Advocacy Day

Earlier this month, [the California Collaborative \(CCLTSS\)](#) hosted its [2021 Virtual Advocacy Day](#) in conjunction with its first premiere sponsorship of [Senior Rally Day 2021](#). After a difficult year at the forefront of suffering and loss from the pandemic, wildfires, and power outages, aging and disability advocates and policymakers joined together for the two-day virtual experience on May 4-5, 2021, with increased hope and optimism.

[The California Master Plan for Aging \(MPA\)](#) held center stage at both events. Administration officials described how far we had come in a year and discussed MPA implementation efforts already underway, including direct investments in the Governor's proposed 2021-2022 state budget. Advocates and legislators discussed an extensive package of 40 bills introduced to support the MPA. Additionally, advocates not only thanked policymakers for their support, but were also shown appreciation by policymakers for their advocacy efforts and contributions which helped to bring the MPA into reality.

What a difference a year makes! As Claire Ramsey, Senior Staff Attorney at Justice in Aging, and Sarah Steenhausen, Director of Policy and Advocacy at The SCAN Foundation, observed during a Senior Rally Day presentation on MPA implementation and legislation: **“the challenges remain, but there is hope for change.”**

### Senior Rally Day

CCLTSS was particularly proud to be a premiere sponsor of this year's Senior Rally Day, supporting the terrific work of the [California Senior Legislature](#) team in building a dynamic virtual space. In addition to an all-star lineup of guests on the virtual main stage guided by Master of Ceremonies Kevin Prindiville, Executive Director of Justice in Aging, the [platform](#) was filled with messages from legislators, an informational exhibitor booth, and an interactive social media wall. The opening sessions included a welcome from Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary to Governor Newsom; updates about MPA implementation by Kim McCoy Wade, Director, California Department of Aging; and a comprehensive budget review by Adam Willoughby, Assistant Director of Legislation, California Department of Aging.



Richard Figueroa noted that the “long overdue” MPA represents the first time in over twenty years that an administration has looked broadly at addressing aging issues. He also gave a shout out to advocacy groups **“who made the MPA and will be needed to carry it through.”** Kim McCoy Wade acknowledged the importance of advocacy and collaboration in her MPA overview stating that, **“despite the year we’ve had, and because of the year we’ve had, it’s more important than ever that we come together and raise our voices.”** She then provided an update of the MPA implementation efforts underway, many of which support continued collaboration with stakeholders and across governmental agencies. These include 100 immediate initiatives agreed upon by the governor’s cabinet, a data-base designed to track and measure MPA implementation, the creation of an Implementing Master Plan for Aging in California Together (IMPACT) Committee, and a new Senior Advisor to the Governor on Aging, Disability, and Alzheimer’s to move the MPA forward with cross-cabinet and public-private collaboration.

Adam Willoughby provided a full review of the proposed 2021-2022 state budget proposal highlighting the substantial new “aging well” investments totaling \$287,800,00. Kim McCoy Wade also shared that the governor’s proposed 2021-2022 budget has two key objectives related to aging and disability:

1. To ensure that an aging lens is woven into each of the state’s priorities from housing to healthcare; and
2. Targeted investments for older adults and people with disabilities that include increases in geriatric care, a robust Alzheimer’s package, housing for older adults experiencing homelessness through Project HomeKey, a “no wrong door” statewide system to streamline and increase access to services, a permanent restoration of a prior 7% cut to IHSS, and funding for key initiatives of the MPA.

Additionally, Adam Willoughby noted that Budget Change Proposals (BCP’s) were submitted by the administration to the legislature for MPA implementation, including funding for ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) expansion, for HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) modernization, and for establishing an Office of the Long-Term Care Representative to provide patient representation.

Sarah Steenhausen and Claire Ramsey briefed advocates on the list of MPA legislation under each of the five Bold Goals and identified key elements needed to ensure success of the MPA, from leadership and accountability to data equity and stakeholder involvement. Prior to break-out sessions with legislators organized by the five MPA topic areas, CCLTSS Board Chair





Eric Dowdy, Chief Government Affairs Officer, LeadingAge California, and Vice-Chair Christina Mills, Executive Director, California Foundation for Independent Living, shared their thoughts on MPA priorities, urging everyone to be involved in developing their local MPA Playbook.

## Advocacy Day 2021

[CCLTSS Advocacy Day](#) “**From Crisis to Recovery: Meeting the Moment with LTSS,**” reached a new milestone this year with over 130 members participating from California Collaborative [Regional Coalitions](#) and a record 65 meetings with legislators and policymakers held throughout the day. These included meetings with leaders from the Office of the Governor, the California Department of Aging, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins, and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Budget, Health, Human Services, and Aging & Long Term Care Committees.

The day was filled with information, insights, and stories of lessons learned from the pain and resilience of the past year and hope for recovery. There was palpable excitement about the prospects for systemic, life-altering change with the launch of California’s historic MPA supported by the administration, legislators, stakeholders, and advocates.

CCLTSS members asked legislators for continued support for successful MPA implementation, including current state budget provisions and legislative oversight of implementation progress. They also brought attention to the [CCLTSS MPA legislative tracker](#) which allows aides to easily track the package of MPA bills.

In its entirety, the two-day event offered a recognition of how far we have come in the past year and, above all, the need to continue the advocacy and collaboration that led to and built the MPA. The administration and the legislature demonstrated a commitment, buoyed by the robust advocacy and events of the past year, to address many of the longstanding issues in older adult and disability program and service delivery. As Sarah Steenhausen observed in her Senior Rally Day presentation, “**we have an incredible framework in the MPA, but this is really where the work begins...we need to partner and figure out how we can sustain our advocacy going forward.**”

CCLTSS 2021 Virtual Advocacy Day and Senior Rally Day 2021 were a big step in that direction!

