

Making The Difference: Creating Age-Friendly Institutions and Community in Alameda County

WENDY OPENING REMARKS

Good Morning. My name is Wendy Peterson and I'm the Director of the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County. On behalf of our Coalition members and Steering Committee, I'd like to welcome you all here today.

I would first like to thank our sponsor, Kaiser Permanente, without whom this convening would not have been possible.

... How can we make a difference in the lives of seniors in Alameda County?

Last year we asked that question at a conference focused on the social determinants that can make a difference in improving health outcomes for seniors. That theme was driven by a growing urgency that community-based service providers were feeling as we saw an aging population increasing in number, economic insecurity, and poor health status... and we recognized that no one sector or silo alone can address this phenomenon.

Well, both of those things are still true. The growing need, and the fact that we have to go it together. But there is a lot that's happening in this county around aging! We're only a little more than a year into the Alameda County Aging Initiative, and we are already seeing shifts in local priorities and greater attention to the needs of older adults.

It's said that sometimes looking ahead into the future is what helps us to understand where we are, what we are, and what it will take to move forward. Today we have the opportunity to think about where we are and where we're going... illuminated by the vision of a potential future as an age-friendly county. We don't know that's in the cards, but thinking about it will help us understand how to move beyond our silos and work together to bring about broad, deep and lasting change that improves the lives of older adults in our county.