

Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

AGING IS SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Jasmeet Bains, Chair
Assembly Aging and Long-Term Care Committee
1020 N Street, Room 153
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Support for Assembly Bill 1313 (Ortega)

Dear Assemblymember Bains,

On behalf of the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County and our 40+ member organizations, I urge you to support AB 1313 (Ortega), which will create a demonstration program for California Department of Aging (CDA) Supportive Services/Case Management in Alameda, Sonoma and Marin Counties.

The CDA Case Management program supports people with complex issues who need more than information and assistance, working toward solutions that complement medical care, connect clients with public and community-based services, and build or reconnect networks of friends and family. The program often represents a lifeline for older people who are economically insecure or isolated. The Case Management program serves low-income older adults who are not eligible for Medi-Cal but nonetheless need supportive services that they cannot afford – a demographic that is growing rapidly.

Economic insecurity of older adult households in California increases with age. Just when seniors are most likely to have serious health/physical/cognitive impairment, they are least able to afford the supportive interventions that will keep them stable. Without supports, an illness, relationship loss, isolation, cognitive decline, or other stressors can destabilize them, putting them at high risk for repeat hospitalizations, housing loss and institutionalization.

Our coalition's members provide health and supportive services to low-income older adults in Alameda County, and we are committed to advancing public policy that improves their health and life outcomes. We worked with our county's leadership and Assemblymember Ortega to draft AB 1313, a proposal that addresses a critical gap in the continuity of care for older adults in communities across the state.

Currently, the CDA Case Management program is funded with Federal Title III B Older American Act (OAA) dollars. This federal funding has remained flat for the past decade, and while recent state budgets have increased funding for some aging services, CDA Case Management receives no state general fund dollars. As a result, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) across the State have had to do more with less, and providers have been unable to grow capacity to meet the growing needs.

AB 1313 will increase the capacity of CDA Case Management programs in the three counties to serve older people who are low income but are not eligible for Medi-Cal, and who need assistance maintain health and economic stability. In addition, it will capture valuable qualitative and quantitative data to measure the impact of case management on resolving unmet social needs and improving health outcomes in low-income older adults, and will help CDA and service providers assess how this service could benefit older adults in the systems of care organized by the Master Plan for Aging.

We urge you to support the proposed legislation to build capacity in this essential service so older Californians will have the support they need navigate the challenges of aging.

Sincerely,



Wendy Peterson
Director, Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County