

Public Comments at September 26, 2016 BOS Joint Health/Social Service Committee

My name is Wendy Peterson and I'm speaking on behalf of the Senior Services Coalition, representing 40 nonprofit and public organizations that provide community-based health and supportive services to older adults in Alameda County.

We support the proposed next steps.

They do a good job of addressing our request for transparency, for meaningful stakeholder participation, and for a central table to hold the big picture and drive planning and implementation forward.

The Council is a good vehicle for the kind of sustained effort that is needed to advance cross sector systems change, and to nurture Age-Friendly community development county-wide. And it will enable CBOs and cities to align their planning and investments with the county's direction.

There is a great deal of enthusiasm for moving forward. There is also recognition that the devil is in the details and that the Council and the new staffer have a challenging mandate that will require developing tools and a process that can handle an evolving environment and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

This community of stakeholders has good ideas to offer regarding the Council's process and composition. So we are glad to hear Randy's recommendation that the retooling of the Council be an open, inclusive and consensus-based process.

CBOs still face significant challenges to their stability, and exasperating barriers to their efforts to develop capacity and programs. Older adults, too, face increasing challenges – we've all been alarmed by rising levels of economic, housing, and food insecurity.

We think we are on the right path to address these pressing issues, as long as we don't let up on the gas pedal. More than anything, the unprecedented level of openness and collaboration that Health Care and Social Services Agencies have shown us over the last several months, makes us optimistic that this path and today's recommendations will lead to meaningful solutions and improvements.

We want to thank the leadership of these agencies for working with us, and we want to thank the Board for your thoughtful attention to this process and to elevating older adult issues in the county.