

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Taking Stock of the Aging Policy Landscape for 2021

Opening Remarks

Friday, January 29, 2021 – 8:30am-12:15pm

Welcome and Good Morning. My name is Wendy Peterson, Director of the Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County. On behalf of all our Coalition's member organizations, it's my pleasure to welcome you all here today.

Before we get started, let's thank the people who made today possible... First a huge thank you to Alameda County Social Services Agency and Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, for their support and partnership in putting this conference together. I'd also like to thank all of our sponsors, Center for Elders' Independence, Alameda Alliance for Health, and Generations Now. Without their generous support this convening would not have been possible.

This is our seventh conference. Each year we've used the convening to bring our community of stakeholders together to talk about how we can make a difference in the lives of older adults in Alameda County.

This year past year has been hard. Pandemic. Recession. Social and economic inequalities that have existed for so long. Any one of them would have been enough!

Even with a new administration in Washington, we still have an enormous task ahead of us. What do we need to pay attention to and when? What are our roles as individuals and organizations? What should we be focusing our collective energy on?

Our hope is that today we'll have some of those questions answered, and that we'll leave here with some actionable next steps.

I want to turn to the community members in the room. We are so glad that we have so many of you here with us today, including stakeholders from the Villages, from United Seniors, from the Pool of Consumer Champions and from St. Mary's Center. We couldn't talk about improving health and life outcomes for older people without your partnership and your voices at the table. So today, when you find yourself in a wonky policy conversation, call us on it, tell us about what really matters to you and to your neighbors. We need to hear you.

So, let me give you an overview of the day... Today we have a series of conversations that will give us a high level overview of the year ahead. We'll hear from local California legislators and from local leaders, our colleagues, who will tell us their policy and systems change priorities. And we'll have a chance to brainstorm concrete solutions with fellow stakeholders from different silos and sectors and the community.

We know that none of the work we have ahead of us will count unless we center equity, and so for our Keynote we will hear about one organization's journey in learning to center equity to advance policy change. And we will endeavor to bring an equity perspective to all the sessions today, and we ask you to do the same.