

SSC Public Comment at April 24, 2017 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 want to thank you for listening to us!

Thank you to Supervisor Miley for shepherding discussions. Thanks to Lori and Rebecca for their commitment to elevating older adult issues in the county.

Our coalition supports the new Working Group format. Three years ago the Board mandated that HCSA and SSA work together with the community to figure out how to address the aging of the county's population. This "Working Group" is a direct result of the collaborative work that has been taking place since then. It is the action-oriented next step that will carry us forward into the future.

We think that this working group configuration will facilitate the collaborative discussions that are needed to advance systems change across silos and sectors.

It will provide the flexibility over time to identify other systems and entities who need to be at the table.

It will enable the nimbleness we need to take advantage of emerging opportunities... this is especially important now more than ever, given the new political landscape and threats to federal funding for healthcare and aging services. Facing these challenges will require coordination, collaboration and creativity across sectors.

Of course, there is a downside to the working group configuration:

The Council's sustainability and its impact over time will be reliant on continued high levels of engagement and good will on the part of your board and agency leadership. When there are transitions in the leadership of either of these two Agencies that are convening the council, we'll call on you to ensure that the baton is passed, and that the commitment to and engagement with this coordinating council stays strong.

Again, our coalition supports the new Working Group and we are looking forward to collectively rolling up our sleeves and getting to work.