



CONGRESS OF CALIFORNIA SENIORS

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RE: Proposals for the California Coordinated Care Initiative

Dear Colleagues:

As you are aware, the Congress of California Seniors has been a strong supporter of the Coordinated Care Initiative from its earliest inception. We supported the Cal Medi-Connect program when it was presented and implemented. Our support is predicated on our certain belief that coordinating the care...acute, primary, preventative, and long term in a system that is person-centered is superior to any other model, especially for frail, elderly people with complex, multiple conditions.

We appreciate the opportunity to send these comments and acknowledge the extraordinary effort the state has made to involve stakeholders in discussing and implementing the policies, procedures, documents and timelines, and in assessing preliminary results of the initiative. Consumer stakeholders have not always had their suggestions adopted, but we have always been given the opportunity for providing input. We also understand that engaging such a large and diverse collection of stakeholders is a complex and time consuming process. But we have usually felt that we have had ample opportunity to have proposals explained, been given time to react and allowed to interact with the state and CMS in multiple venues.

Like others, we are disappointed that participation in CCI and Cal Medi-Connect has fallen short of our expectations. In retrospect, we believe a stronger marketing approach should have been used and that managed care plans should have been given a larger role and more latitude to interact with eligible consumers. The model here is like Medicare and, as a Medicare enrollee, I received a considerable amount of marketing material with the pros and cons of different Medicare products which helped me make decisions that best suit my needs.

I am also certain we underestimated the reluctance of frail people, people who have spent years stitching together a care system that meets their individual needs, to take actions that would create change. I hope both the DHCS and CMS will begin to consider new approaches and go back to persons who opted out to persuade them to re-think their choices.

Now we have proposals to change the enrollment process, recognizing that counties have completed initial enrollment and need to deal with people who have become eligible after the initial process has been completed. Knowing as we do that 1,000 people become eligible for Medicare every day in California, we recognize this is an important task. We also recognize that long term enrollment growth is critical to sustain this coordinated care model. Without such growth, the Governor has made it clear that his administration will not continue the program into the future...so our most important task is to discover appropriate ways to increase enrollment and retention of participants. We also recognize that, with recent expansion of MediCal under the Affordable Care Act, that many older adults enrolled in MediCal will be managed care enrollees when they age into Medicare and should have a seamless transition with their existing providers. This should further sustain the model.

To promote coordinated care, DHCS proposes to undertake streamlined and passive enrollment for newly eligible people. It will give plans a chance to do targeted outreach and create a simpler process for beneficiaries to make appropriate choices. It would focus on members already enrolled in the plan's MediCal product. They would gain by having all their services and providers across the continuum of care available through one plan, with minimal disruption and without any threat to continuity of care. It would increase consumer protections.

We laud the efforts of the Department of Health Care Services to extend a better model of care to new populations with a minimum of disruption and confusion for the population we serve...and strongly support the pending changes.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Gary Passmore" in a cursive script.

Gary Passmore
Congress of California Services