

Sierra County Supervisor District 5, Hubs & Spokes for Aging & Disability Network Public Comment

Oct. 6, 2021

Dear Ms. McCoy Wade,

As elected representative for Sierra County, and a member of the governing board of AAA4, I have been listening carefully to the ongoing discussion of the proposed CDA's AGING HUBS & SPOKE INITIATIVE. After attending the recent TOWN HALL meeting for Rural Counties and reading the information being presented, I am left feeling more confused and with more questions than answers.

First, as one of the smallest population counties in CA, with just 3 people per square mile, it is hard for me to grasp how these models will better serve our senior population that are so dependent on services. Indeed, over 60% of our population is 60+ years of age, so a very large population of our folks will be affected by this decision. The ramifications of changes to our funding could be quite upsetting to our local providers, and those who have become dependent on those services.

For context of what we are doing here, and I believe we are doing very well, and I am very proud of our program, is we have ONE provider! This one little group, Seniors, Inc, is a non-profit that prepares and delivers meals, outreach, transportation and connects clients who need or qualify for services with our partners at HHS, other local non-profits and faith-based organizations. They work closely to identify all client's needs, and work to address the gaps in services. They have been able to meet those challenges with the support of our JPA with AAA4. Being the small kid on the block, and having the support of larger counties, particularly Sacramento County, has benefited us greatly. Also, the personalized support of AAA4 staff in meeting the demands of operating on such small budgets has been invaluable.

I would like to better understand the criteria that will be used to establish how any new maps will be drawn up, or who will designate what AAA we will belong to? And the bigger question that remains to be answered so Sierra County can make an informed decision on what is best for our

Senior population, is how will these changes affect our funding? We have limited staff, and ever ballooning challenges with hiring new staff, to take on any more administrative load or burden. Furthermore, one of the greatest challenges I see to wrapping senior services into a model with HHS, is the fact that seniors do not want to be part of "social service program/ government handout" model. They are proud, independent people and our program here is intended to help them retain that spirit of pride and independence as long as possible. Sierra County has no assisted care facility, no independent living facilities, in fact we do not even have a pharmacy located in the entire county. - 2 - The only option we have as a person is no longer able to stay in their residence is one skilled nursing site, which is often unable to accommodate them due to staffing or beds, and they must move out of community. This is devastating to them and their families. So, the local model of support we are able to deliver is vitally important to their well-being and independence.

The implications of this decision to Sierra County cannot be overstated. Please provide more information on the process, so we can start to understand what our options are and have time to prepare for the outcomes.

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