



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

September 3, 2021

Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency
600 9th St. Suite 460
Sacramento, CA, 95814

Kim McCoy Wade, Director
California Department of Aging
1300 National Drive, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA, 95834

Dear Dr. Ghaly and Director McCoy Wade:

The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) is pleased to submit additional comments and suggestions concerning the Hub and Spokes proposal currently under consideration by the Department of Aging (CDA). The proposal, among other actions, would reorganize provision of a wide range of social, educational, legal, and healthcare related services delivered to older adults and individuals with disabilities in California. **We support investments to strengthen the principal system of care designed to meet the needs of older adults. Furthermore, we believe that system can be expanded to effectively deliver the fuller scope and quality of services CDA and the Master Plan on Aging envisions.**

Area Agencies on Aging(AAAs) serve as the lead planner, funder, program developer, and triage agent for a wide range of services. In that capacity, AAAs actively engage in providing services directly and serve as both a Spoke and a Hub by:

- Assessing and evaluating the needs, concerns and preferences of older adults and family caregivers, referring individuals and their caregivers to service providers, an essential activity of a Hub;
- Developing, maintaining, and strengthening community partnerships to support the comprehensive service needs of older adults and their caregivers;
- Collaborating with service providers to develop and implement responsive programs and services, providing oversight and quality control, a critical Hub activity that is a normal part of AAA service network development and operations;
- Developing new programs, strategies, and partnerships in concert with the Independent Living Centers through the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs);
- Educating and advocating with local, state, and federal officials and community stakeholders to develop policies which improve quality of life and support livable



communities for all ages, all abilities, and all backgrounds, thus integrating process improvement into its operations;

- Implementing and overseeing recommendations resulting from process improvement activities, an essential activity of a Hub.

AAAs are the community Hubs for older adults and have been for over 40 years. We believe that AAAs should participate in any system evaluation, network design, and implementation. AAAs are the bedrock on which to build.

Nevertheless, a greater understanding of structural and process issues that currently impact effective service delivery should be gained before prudently embarking on widescale system change. Part of that understanding will come from information gathered from the Town Halls and surveys currently underway. Whatever information emerges from those efforts, **we believe that CDA should commission a systems analysis of design elements as part of a strategic change process to support higher quality and more effective service delivery.** California AAAs look forward to participating in that evaluation, in part because AAAs would likely provide the lion share of services in any resulting system, and because **we believe in system change that achieves high quality integrated service delivery for older Californians and individuals with disabilities.**

C4A supports changes in the structure of the statewide AAA network that are based on informed decision making and which fully fund any new service requirements.

To help achieve coordinated information and referral as part of a Hub and Spokes model, **we believe that CDA should re-examine ADRC expansion plans and funding methodologies to support coordination with, and integration into, any final Hub and Spokes system design.**

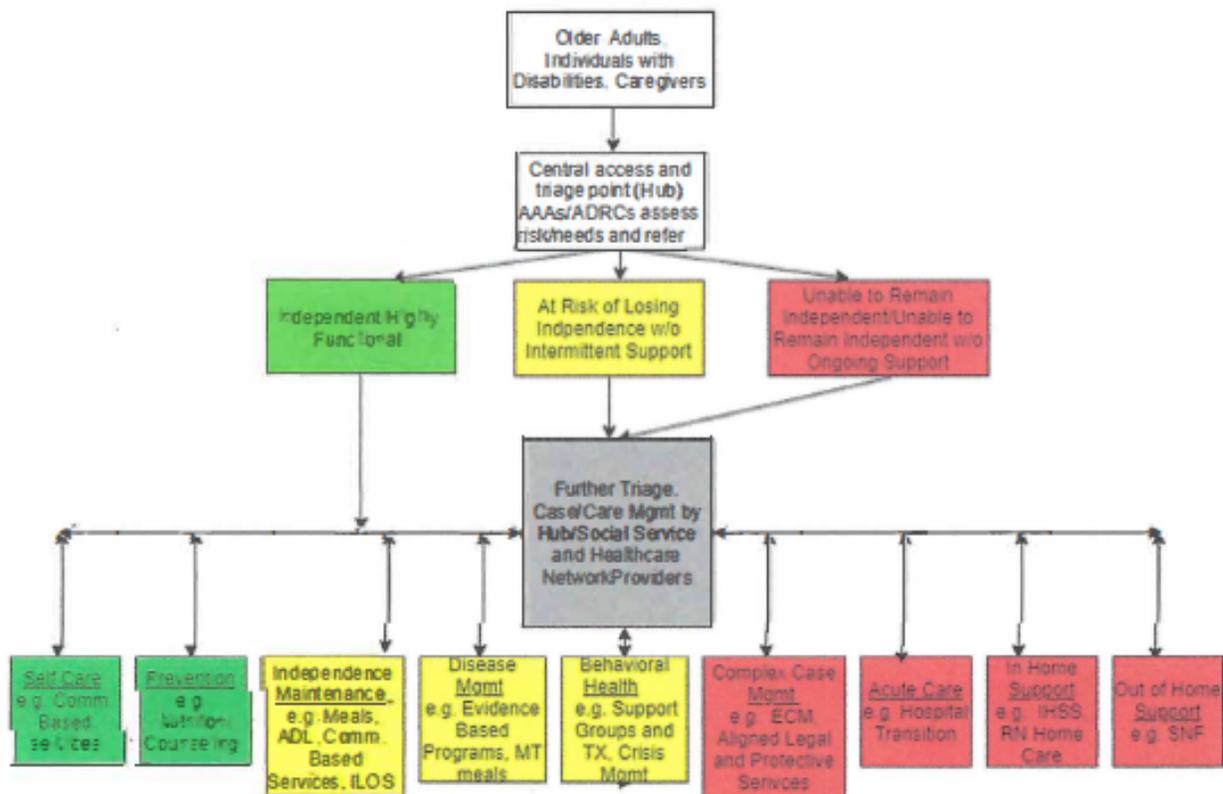
Delivery System Values and Design

Basic elements of a new/enhanced system **should embody a Services Follow the Person approach, where services are coordinated and delivered to address needs as an individual ages and their level of functionality and health status change.** The delivery network would of necessity involve coordination and integration of a much wider range of services and service providers than currently exists in California. It would also involve development and implementation of a sophisticated IT system to collect and analyze data, measure outcomes, amend and improve process, quality, and equity, and be able to reimburse providers in a timely and accurate manner.

The following diagram is a suggested delivery model that places AAAs/ADRCs as the Hub and shows the range and interconnectivity of services and service providers. This system is currently



in place is most of the Area Agencies on Aging. **Crucial to success of a Hub and Spokes approach is an ongoing as-needed triage function that captures the changes in an individual recipient's condition and health status and refers that individual to appropriate providers. Also critical is the development of effective care teams comprising social service and healthcare providers**, a development that is in the early stage of development in most markets serving older adults and individuals with disabilities.



C4A looks forward to continuing to work with CDA to address the needs of older Californians and individuals with disabilities. We hope our comments are helpful in reaching that goal.

Sincerely,

L. Michael Costa
Executive Director

cc. Victoria Jump