

A Five-Year Plan for Meeting the Needs of a Growing Senior Population in Placer County – Third Annual Update

Submitted by Placer County Health and Human Services September 2019

Background

The Five-Year Plan for Meeting the Needs of a Growing Senior Population in Placer County was received by the Placer County Board of Supervisors on January 10, 2017. The initial emphasis of the Plan was to address the needs of older adults in Placer County by researching and promoting a method to consolidate services and establish a single point of entry for long term services and supports. The Recommendations and Implementation Plan followed the World Health Organization's eight domains of livability that influence the quality of life of older adults and was used as a framework in developing an age-friendly community. It was intended to be a dynamic document that would be updated as actions are completed and/or more information comes forward. Many of the recommendations to move Placer towards an age-friendly county require collaboration and efforts on the part of business and civic groups, community agencies, and city and county government beyond Health and Human Services (HHS).

As stated in the Plan, it is useful to have a committee or commission to oversee the implementation processes. The Older Adult Advisory Commission (OAAC) is the voice of Placer County older adults and took a lead role in developing and supporting the implementation of the County Plan. The OAAC continues to discuss and clarify what is possible in our communities and determine action steps. The OAAC has determined that four of the eight domains are areas of focus in Placer County. These domains were prioritized and assigned to Commission members for further needs assessment and advocacy, and will be a focus of the OAAC's Annual Report.

HHS has continued to support the OAAC and took steps to implement the Plan through the course of its work in the prioritized domains. HHS is a member of the OAAC Executive Committee and actively participates in monthly OAAC meetings and events. In addition, HHS is a member of the Placer County Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRC) Steering and Advisory Committees. Further, HHS is a member of Placer PROTECT (Providing Resources & Outreach to Elderly Citizens Together) and participates in monthly PROTECT meetings and events. These integral connections support a coordinated, collaborative effort to identify and address the needs of the older adult population in Placer County.

Placer County 5-Year Plan for Meeting the Needs of a Growing Senior Population
Recommendations and Implementation Plan – Annual Update

1 Communication and Information

There is a significant need to raise awareness of, and participation in, the many resources, programs, and services available to Placer County older adults. A sustainable, centralized model for information and assistance is needed as a conduit for older adults and people with disabilities to become aware of and access available resources.

The County has offered an online Network of Care service for several years. This model provides referral information to the community via a website including hours of operation, eligibility requirements, and contact information. However, the extent to which the community is aware of this service and utilizes it remains questionable. For Network of Care to be a viable source of information, there needs to be increased marketing to the general public. Additionally, some seniors indicate that reliance on technology is a barrier to accessing information. While most seniors stated they use the internet, they also indicated it was not helpful to them in getting actual information and that they often struggled to maneuver through websites.

An emerging source of information and assistance for older adults is the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) of Placer County. The ADRC is a collaboration of partner organizations designed to streamline access to services for people with disabilities, older adults, family members and caregivers. HHS has participated on the ADRC Advisory Committee and supported the designation of an ADRC in Placer County since its inception in 2015. The ADRC has created an Enhanced Information and Assistance (I&A) Protocol, which establishes a systematic process for information sharing, referral, and assistance, to meet the needs of individuals looking for Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) options. This system will serve people of all ages, disabilities, and income levels with objective and unbiased information on the full range of LTSS options and when needed, assistance with referral and service connections, coordination, and service delivery. The Enhanced I&A will be provided by four Core Service Providers: Placer Independent Resource Services, Seniors First, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, and Agency on Aging-Area 4. The Core Service Providers I &A staff will be trained and certified by the Alliance of Information and Referrals Systems (AIRS) and will utilize a “warm-handoff” technique when referring to extended partners. The ADRC Advisory Committee’s application for designation with the California Department on Aging was recently approved. In addition, \$5 million in grant funds was included in the 2019-20 Governor’s Budget to expand or strengthen the services designated ADRCs provide. HHS will continue to support the ADRC as it moves from development to implementation.

The nonprofit organization Seniors First is generally recognized as the primary source of information and assistance regarding senior resources and services in Placer County. Their information and referral specialists, available Monday through Friday, are equipped to respond to individuals, caregivers, family members, or other interested citizens. They provide assistance on a variety of topics including care options, transportation, home-delivered meals, counseling, financial assistance, assistive devices, utility discounts, subsidized housing, and more. HHS will continue to work collaboratively with Seniors First to meet the needs of older adults throughout the community.

Because there is a significant need to raise awareness of the resources, programs, and services available to older adults in Placer County, Seniors First, in collaboration with the Older Adult Advisory Commission and Agency on Aging-Area 4, will be launching a Placer County public information campaign titled “Senior411.org.” The campaign will run July 15 – September 30, 2019 and target adults ages 60+, adult family members, caregivers and stakeholders. Communities targeted will include Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, Loomis/Newcastle, Auburn, Colfax, Meadow Vista, Forest Hill, Truckee and North Lake Tahoe. The campaign will outreach through town hall meetings, community fairs/festivals and promotional materials. Advertising will be conducted via print, radio, social media, bus panels, community access television and digital billboards. In addition to advertising, a stakeholder/community partner marketing toolkit and specialized Seniors First Resource Guide will be created and distributed. The website “senior411.org” will contain numerous links to senior resources in areas such as housing, nutrition, transportation, mental health services, suicide prevention, legal services, and elder abuse protection. Campaign efforts will be measured for evaluation and HHS will participate in the town hall meetings to further identify gaps in senior services in Placer County.

With recent direction from the Board of Supervisors, Placer County HHS is moving forward with the implementation of a 2-1-1 information and referral system. The 2-1-1 system/model will provide a sustainable, centralized point of entry for older adults and people with disabilities in need of long-term services and supports in Placer County. As the 2-1-1 system is developed, it is recommended that there be partnership with current older adult information and assistance providers in the County. Such partnership will incorporate the comprehensive knowledge of local resources that current providers possess, resulting in more effective 2-1-1 referrals to the benefit of older adults and people with disabilities.

2 Transportation

There continues to be a significant foundation of options for transportation available to older adults in Placer County, however increased public awareness is needed. Older Adults tend to become more dependent on public transit as they lose the ability to drive. Over 19 percent of Placer County residents are age 65 and older and that number is expected to rise to 27 percent by 2040. With the implementation of a 2-1-1 system, it is hoped that older adults in the County become more aware of the transportation options available to them.

The Western Placer Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (WPCTSA) provides specialized transportation programs for residents who are not able to use conventional public transit services within western Placer County. Each program responds to a unique transportation need not otherwise currently met or met well within a prescribed service area. The WPCTSA operates the regional Transit Ambassador Program to educate new passengers in becoming familiar with transit services and provide assistance to passengers at transit transfer points. It also operates the Retired Dial-a-Ride Vehicle Program, which purchases retired (surplus) dial-a-ride vehicles from Placer transit operators and sells the vehicles to local social service non-profit organizations for a nominal amount for use to transport elderly and/or disabled clients.

The WPCTSA continues to collaborate with the local non-profit organization Seniors First to provide two additional programs: Health Express Non-Emergency Medical Transportation and My Rides

Program. My Rides provides free transportation services to non-emergency medical appointments and other essential services for Placer County seniors and people with disabilities. Eligible services include grocery shopping, banking, dentist appointments, lab and pharmacy visits, and hair appointments. Transportation is provided by volunteer drivers who are approved and scheduled by Seniors First. My Rides currently services all communities in Placer County based on volunteer availability.

The Health Express program provides non-emergency medical transportation outside the service areas of the public dial-a-rides and to Sacramento area hospitals on an advance-reservation, shared-ride basis. Health Express serves Placer County residents over the age of 60 or disabled residing just east of Colfax to the Sacramento County line and includes the cities of Colfax, Sheridan, Forest Hill, Auburn, Lincoln, Loomis, Rocklin, and Roseville.

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) determined that there was one new unmet transit need that was reasonable to meet for FY 2019/20, which would be to the benefit of older adults and people with disabilities. It was determined that there is a need for service between Lincoln and Rocklin for someone who is physically unable to use the Placer County Transit Lincoln/Sierra College fixed-route. Placer County, Lincoln, and Rocklin will work together to ensure that individuals who meet this criterion can be served by Dial-A-Ride services between Lincoln and Rocklin. Data will be collected for 24 months for this modified service and analyzed to determine the feasibility of this modified service, the number of the requests for service by jurisdiction and location, and the best operational methods for implementation.

The WPCTSA Short Range Transit Plan for 2018-2025 identified several strategies for consideration/further study to improve mobility for the elderly, low income, disabled and otherwise transportation disadvantaged Placer County residents who are unable to use the traditional fixed route services. One notable strategy is to contract with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) or “microtransit” companies such as Lyft or Uber. TNCs may supplement Dial-A-Rides when there is a lack of volunteer drivers or for trips to/from rural areas not serviced by fixed routes. TNCs could also offer medical transportation outside hours of operation of the public transit service. It was recommended in the 2018 Placer County Transit, Short Range Transit Plan – Alternatives Memorandum that general public Dial-A-Ride be replaced by a contract with TNC/microtransit companies within Granite Bay.

The Tahoe Transportation District serves the South Lake Tahoe region and offers a complementary South Shore Area ADA Paratransit Service for persons 65 years of age and older and individuals with disabilities who meet eligibility criteria. Paratransit service hours are the same as the local fixed operating hours and the service area extends to origins and destinations one mile on each side of the fixed routes.

The Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART) provides public transportation for the Truckee-North Lake Tahoe region and offers a complimentary ADA taxi service called Placer TART Paratransit Service. This service is comparable to the level of fixed route bus service, operating 6:00 am to 6:00 pm 7 days per week within ¾ mile of the TART fixed route buses. TART also offers a Dial-A-Ride service year

round with priority service for seniors and people with disabilities. Trips are available within the town limits 7 days per week. Additionally, the City of South Lake Tahoe Senior Center offers free transportation on Thursdays and Fridays within South Lake Tahoe for seniors on a reservation basis only.

HHS will continue to research the various public transportation options being planned and assess whether they will meet the growing needs of older adults in Placer County.

3 Housing

The number of homeless older adults is on the rise in California due to several factors including financial instability, isolation, illness, and a lack of affordable housing. The January 2019 Placer County Homeless Point in Time Count found that 16 percent of those counted were adults 60 years or older. Moreover, there were 88 clients over the age of 65 on the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) who are experiencing homelessness and awaiting more permanent housing.

HHS in conjunction with the Homeless Resource Council of the Sierras (HRCS) contracted with a consulting firm to create the Placer County Homeless Strategic Plan 2019. The plan incorporated input from critical stakeholders and identified six strategies to address homelessness in Placer County: 1) develop affordable housing with supportive services, 2) continue to support CDRA housing development stakeholder meetings, 3) communicate consistently with the general public about homelessness, 4) increase investment in treatment – alcohol, drug, and mental health, 5) increase emergency housing beds, and 6) continue participation in the Build for Zero Campaign, a national effort to support local organizations in gathering and using real-time data to increase their effectiveness in moving homeless individuals into permanent housing.

The new Strategic Plan incorporates several programs that serve older adults living with complex needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Whole Person Care (WPC) is a five-year pilot program that coordinates physical health, behavioral health, and social services for at-risk individuals who are high users of multiple services, including hospital emergency departments, probation, mental health and substance use programs, and social services. The WPC team actively engages individuals to build trust and motivate their enrollment into the program. A comprehensive health assessment is used to identify participants with the most critical need to expedite services. WPC offers medical respite beds to individuals who are homeless, in an unstable living situation, and/or too ill or frail to recover from physical illness/injury in their usual living environment (but not in need of treatment from a hospital or skilled nursing facility). Additionally, WPC offers comprehensive housing services to participants who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Housing transition services assist the individual to obtain housing and develop daily living skills to support them to remain stable in their new living situation. A recent review of WPC data from 2018 revealed that 26 participants were over the age of 65 and 10 were over the age of 70.

Full Service Partnership (FSP) is also managed by HHS and provides intensive services to individuals with a serious mental illness, including older adults. Services include crisis residential services, rent subsidies, and supporting new services and funding to augment the Continuum of Care provided to individuals at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. For instance, the Adult System of Care is

working with Turning Point Community Programs on an FSP to reduce the need for hospitalization, interactions with the criminal justice system, and to reduce homelessness. Specific activities include a 24-hour phone response to crisis issues that arise in the home related to our consumers' mental health needs. Assistance is also available to coordinate access to any community-based services that are not otherwise provided by the County and which are essential for achieving and maintaining independent living. A review of fiscal year 2018-19 data revealed that 23 FSP participants were age 65 or older, 12 of which were homeless.

In December 2018 Placer County was among 15 counties selected to implement the State's new homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing demonstration grant program titled Home Safe. The California Department of Social Services awarded HHS \$469,000 to implement Home Safe from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021. Each month the HHS Adult Protective Services program receives approximately 167 new cases, many of which involve an older adult who is at risk of losing their housing or has recently become homeless as a result of financial exploitation, physical abuse, or caregiver neglect. The Home Safe program enables trained Adult Protective Services staff to provide short-term housing crisis intervention to help clients stabilize and recover while maintaining or securing housing. Staff work with landlords, utility companies, legal services and other community resources to develop solutions. Home Safe interventions can include short-term rental and utility assistance, hoarding interventions/cleaning services, mental health treatment, intensive case management, and more. The Home Safe program will enhance Placer County's Continuum of Care through homeless prevention and early intervention for vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities.

4 Community and Health Services

There is a wealth of community and health services available to support and enrich the lives of older adults in Placer County. Services range from caregiving, food and nutrition, mental health, caregiver support, abuse protection, and more. HHS administers several programs designed to help older adults live as comfortably, safely, and independently as possible. HHS understands the importance of collaboration with community partners to ensure its programs rise to meet new challenges and serve the community in an effective manner.

The HHS Adult Protective Services program, in collaboration with the County's elder abuse task force team Placer PROTECT (Providing Resources & Outreach to Elderly Citizens Together), continued to raise awareness regarding elder abuse and the resources available to assist older adults in Placer County. HHS worked with the Placer County District Attorney's Office to promote the "Preparing is Caring" Senior Resource Fair on June 4, 2019 at the Maidu Senior Center in Roseville. The community event focused on answering common questions related to aging and brought together 35 vendors who offered information and resources to older adults, their family, caregivers, and other interested community members. The vendors included: HHS Adult System of Care, Placer Independent Resource Services, AARP, Salvation Army, Social Security, DMV, Ombudsman, BrightStar Care, Bristol Hospice, Sheriff's Dept., Legal Services of Nor. CA, Alzheimer's Assoc., Roseville Police Dept., Seniors First, CA Dept. of Justice, Cal Fresh, Placer Food Bank, CA Community Care Licensing, and many more. The event was very successful as over 250 guests attended and 365 meals were served by the Salvation Army. In addition, AARP provided guests with complimentary shredding of over 30,000 lbs. of documents and Legal Services of Northern CA. conducted 24 legal clinics. For next year's event a

larger facility/location is being sought, as the number of vendors and guests are expected to increase significantly.

The HHS In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program helps pay for care services provided to older adults and people with disabilities, so that they can remain safely in their own home. IHSS is considered an alternative to out-of-home care, such as nursing homes or board and care facilities. The types of services which can be authorized through IHSS are housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, personal care services (such as bowel and bladder care, bathing, grooming, and paramedical services), accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision for the mentally impaired. IHSS currently serves approximately 3,450 consumers residing in Placer County. HHS is a member of the IHSS Advisory Commission, which serves as a bridge to improve the IHSS system for consumers and providers by being an on-going conduit of information and advocacy to the Board of Supervisors and for the entire community.

Beginning June 1, 2019 California seniors who receive Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) became eligible for CalFresh (food stamps) benefits, per a policy change included in the 2018-19 state budget. A collaboration between the HHS programs Human Services–CalFresh and IHSS identified that there were 414 IHSS consumers age 65 or older with SSI/SSP in Placer County who are newly eligible for CalFresh. Coordinated outreach is being conducted by both programs to notify these consumers of their eligibility. Access to CalFresh nutrition assistance will increase food security for these seniors, leading to fewer being forced to choose between basics like food and medicine. It also gives these seniors more flexibility to direct money toward other needs, such as housing.

HHS also administers the IHSS Public Authority (PA) program. The PA acts as the employer of record for approximately 3,400 IHSS home care providers in Placer County. The PA also provides information and assistance to IHSS consumers who need help selecting a provider. The PA maintains a care provider Registry and matches consumers to providers who meet the consumers' service needs. The PA supports a positive, productive relationship between consumers and providers. The PA recently implemented a new feature on its website that allows providers to submit their Registry application online. This has improved customer service and streamlined PA business processes.

While the great majority of IHSS consumers have family members providing for their care, there are approximately 773 consumers on the PA Registry without a provider. There are only 333 Registry providers available for matching to a consumer. Thus, there is a shortage of Registry providers. The PA is working in a proactive, innovative manner to identify and recruit providers. This year the PA has focused on collaboration with partners in the community. The PA will be participating in five job/resource fairs throughout the County and has created informational wallet cards for distribution. The PA has partnered with Roseville Connections One Stop Career Center and Golden Sierra Job Training Agency to host job fairs in both Roseville and Auburn, which will include on-site interviewing. The PA is also working with the California Employment Development Dept. for recruitment of providers with disabilities. The PA is collaborating with neighboring PA's such as Sacramento County to recruit in the Roseville area and Nevada County to recruit in Placer County's rural areas close to Grass Valley. Recently, the PA began contacting existing providers who are already caring for a consumer, but have extra hours available that can be allocated to another consumer in need. This has proven to be the most successful form of recruiting this year and has resulted in 37 providers being added to the Registry. The PA continues to utilize social media for recruitment, and is working with

the HHS Public Information Officer to update its Facebook page with a link to the newly available online PA Registry application tool.

A community service offered by HHS to improve the mental health of older adults through prevention and early intervention is the Senior Peer Counseling (SPC) program. This program is a free, short-term, peer support, goal-oriented program for Placer County residents who are 55 years and older. SPC trains older adult volunteers to become Peer Counselors and matches them with older adults in the community for short-term support with issues such as family conflict, adjustment to health or living situation, loss of independence (e.g., loss of driver's license), caregiver stress, loneliness, depression, and other age-related transitional concerns. The Peer Counselors are in a unique position to help because they bring their own life experience and are trained to listen, support, and gently coach the client towards their stated goals. New clients start by setting small goals that they work towards, leading to a sense of autonomy, purpose and improved mental health. In fiscal year 2018-19 there was a monthly average of 12 active Peer Counselors and 10 clients. The Peer Counselors spent an average of 248 voluntary hours with the clients each month, offering their support and assistance.

While strong foundational resources exist, HHS will continue to assess community and health services for older adults in Placer County to meet the growing needs of this population.