



Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, August 19, 2025

TIME: 12:30 PM

LOCATION: United Way, 4450 Capitola Road, Ste 106, Capitola CA 95010

PRESENT: Dena Taylor (*1st District*), Suzanne Doty (*Chair - 1st District*), Antonio Rivas (*2nd District*), Lois Sones (*3rd District*), Alicia Rodriguez (*3rd District*), Katie Limas (*Vice Chair - 4th District*), Carol Childers (*5th District*), Roger Wapner (*5th District*)

EXCUSED: Mark Johannessen (*2nd District*)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Kaite McGrew (*Commissions Manager*)

GUESTS: Alicia Morales (*Social Services Director*) and 1 member of the public were present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review

Meeting convened at 12:33 PM.

2. Motion to Approve June 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes

Motion/Second: Taylor/Rivas

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment: None

4. New Business/Action Items:

4.1. Assisted Living Waiver Program Overview

Morales provided an overview of the Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver Program (ALWP), a state and federally administered program that enables low-income individuals who meet nursing home-level care criteria to receive support in assisted living or other community-based settings. The program currently operates in 15 California counties and has an active waitlist. Expansion opportunities may arise in 2029, but participation requires state and local cost commitments, contracted facilities willing to accept Medi-Cal rates, and administrative capacity to manage the program. Barriers to local participation include the limited number of assisted living providers, most of which are private pay; high local operating costs; and uncertainty regarding federal and state funding stability. Medi-Cal eligibility is also contracting, raising concerns about future access.

The Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) was presented as a complementary model providing comprehensive health care, housing, and support services for Medi-Cal and Medicare-eligible seniors who live independently. A local market study found Santa Cruz County to be a strong candidate for PACE implementation; however, it would require approval from the Central California Alliance for Health and the Department of Health Care Services.

Barriers to PACE implementation include lack of managed care plan approval, concerns about provider retention and community integration, and general fund constraints that limit staff and case management resources.

4.2. Assisted Living Waiver Program Advocacy

Commission discussed the potential benefits of pursuing both PACE and ALWP simultaneously, forming a coalition of community partners to advocate for participation, and advocating to address service silos that impede coordination among local agencies. Given that the next ALWP expansion is not scheduled for some years, the Commission discussed alternative ways to support County seniors which included reviewing the Master Plan for Aging Playbook frequently and aligning the Commission's Strategic Action Plan more closely with the priorities established therein, as well monitoring Board of Supervisors activities for additional advocacy opportunities.

Rivas was excused.

Taylor was excused.

4. District Reports

5.1. District 1

Doty shared information about the Sheriff department's scam hotline.

5.2. District 2: No report

5.3. District 3

Sones encouraged Commissioners to reread the Master Plan on Aging to remind them of the priorities and next steps. The In-Home-Support Services Commission has 4 IHSS recipient vacancies. Sones also expressed concern that the cleanup of the homeless encampment at the Watsonville levy may displace a lot of South County seniors. Rodriguez had no report.

5.4. District 4: No Report

5.5. District 5:

Wapner shared information about the "Young at Heart" multi-page spread in the Sentinel. Childers had no report.

6. Senior Legislature Report

Staff reported that SB-239 (Brown Act Telecommunications) was placed in the Inactive File by the bill's author. It could be reactivated again this year, or brought back next year, but is currently not under consideration.

7. Staff Report: No Report

8. Correspondence: None

9. Emerging Matters and Commissioner Announcements: None

10. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Manager*