

5 Planning for the Future

5.1 San Mateo County

Numerous departments, agencies, non-profit and advocacy groups in San Mateo County and in the San Francisco Peninsula region are working together to serve seniors today and tomorrow and to make the county a vibrant, livable place for everybody. How intertwined the mandates, missions and activities of the different stakeholders are, is illustrated in the following table showing the goals, strategies and resources compiled by the San Mateo County Health System to prepare for an aging population.

Goal: Older adults must be able to get around without driving	
Recommendations for City and Regional Planning Agencies	
Prioritize the development of housing in transit-rich centers	Policylink www.policylink.org
Expand public transit connections	Senior Mobility Initiative and Guide http://www.seniormobility.org/ National Complete Streets Coalition www.completestreets.org
Increase the number of neighborhood destinations that can be reached on foot and bike	Grand Boulevard Initiative www.grandboulevard.net National Complete Streets Coalition www.completestreets.org
Implement street designs that are safe and inviting	Public Health Law and Policy www.phlpnet.org
Goal: Older adults need accessible homes in accessible places	
Recommendations for Cities and Developers	
Prioritize affordable housing for both renters and homeowners, increase the stock of TOD units	21 Elements in San Mateo County www.21elements.com
Implement universal design standards	Concrete Change

	<p>www.concretechange.org</p> <p>Baby Boomers Get Smart: Local and State Strategies to Prepare for the Aging Population</p> <p>www.epa.gov/agingepa/resources/presentations/2008_0208_smart-growth-conference-markwood.pdf</p>
Increase the number of public gathering places	<p>Grand Boulevard Initiative</p> <p>www.grandboulevard.net</p> <p>Project for Public Places</p> <p>www.pps.org</p> <p>Growing Smarter, Living Healthier: A Guide to Smart Growth and Active Aging</p> <p>www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/guide/index.html</p>
Organize volunteer opportunities	<p>Portland Parks and Recreation and Bureau of Transportation, Oregon</p> <p>www.epa.gov/aging</p>
Engage the local community in conceiving new mobility options	<p>Environmental and Policy Change for Healthy Aging</p> <p>www.agingfriendly.org</p> <p>NACCHO Community Design/Land Use Planning</p> <p>www.naccho.org</p>
Reinvent the traditional senior center	<p>Lesley Senior Communities</p> <p>http://www.lesleyseniorcommunities.org/</p>
Support community capacity that assists older adults in maintaining health	<p>AARP</p> <p>www.aarp.org</p> <p>San Mateo County Aging and Adult Services, Network of Care</p> <p>http://sanmateo.networkofcare.org/mh/</p> <p>Department of Health and Human Services, Eldercare Locator</p> <p>www.eldercare.gov</p>

Table 1: Goals, strategies and resources compiled by San Mateo County Health System to prepare for the aging population in the county. Source: San Mateo County Health System, Health Planning and Policy. (2010). Maintaining the Health of an Aging San Mateo County, pp.10-11.

In addition to these more longer-term oriented changes in community planning and design, Aging and Adult Services of San Mateo County provides numerous services and programs to today's seniors and adults with disabilities, including:

- Home and community-based services contracts include:
 - Nutrition
 - Transportation
 - Ombudsman

- Adult Day Care and Adult Day Health
- Legal Aid

In addition, AAS serves as the Area Agency on Aging and prepares the multi-year area plans in collaboration with organizations throughout the county. The Four-Year Plan includes:

- Needs assessment
- Plan for addressing the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities across our county

The 2012-2016 needs assessment identified the issues and concerns that are listed in Table 2. The issues named in bold font are addressed in this report.

Accidents	Obtaining information
Employment	Transportation
Money to live on	Taking care of a child
Crime	Isolation
Taking care of an adult	Receiving services
Household chores	

Table 2: The issues and concerns reported by respondents to the 2012-2016 needs assessment survey conducted by the AAA.

5.2 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) is bringing several changes to the way seniors can obtain medical services. The ACA strengthens Medicare and helps seniors take charge of their health. The law provides important benefits such as free preventive services, free annual wellness visits, and a 50 percent discount on prescription drugs for Medicare recipients in the coverage gap known as the "donut hole."¹

In addition, the ACA provides for

- Lower premiums and extend the solvency of Medicare
- Lower drug costs
- Protected and improved access to health care providers
- Focus on primary care
- Prioritize prevention

For people without healthcare insurance, especially those in the age bracket of 45-64 years, the ACA is bringing several important changes that will help them obtain coverage:

- Affordable Insurance Exchanges are designed to make buying health coverage easier and more affordable. Starting in 2014, these Exchanges will allow individuals and small businesses to find the health plan that meets their needs. The Exchange is also

¹ <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/2011/08/seniors.html> (last accessed November 2, 2012).

the single place where consumers can enroll in private or public health insurance coverage.

- Beginning September 2012, when shopping for health insurance, consumers will be able to compare plans on the basis of the new short and plain language Summary of Benefits and Coverage, or SBC, form, which all health insurers have to make available for their plans. The SBC form can be requested in different languages.
- The ACA improves state-level Consumer Assistance Programs (CAPs) services aimed at providing consumers with more relevant information when they experience a health insurance problem, including enrolling in a health plan.
- Since July 2011, the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan makes health coverage available to U.S. citizens and legal residents that have been denied health insurance because of a pre-existing condition, and have been uninsured for at least six months.
- By January 2014, the ACA provides for a new type of non-profit health insurer, called a Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP). These insurers are run by their customers. CO-OPs are meant to offer consumer-friendly, affordable health insurance options to individuals and small businesses.

San Mateo County was selected by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to be one of eight counties in its proposal to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to run demonstration projects. If approved, the Health Plan of San Mateo in collaboration with the SMC HS will aim to integrate medical benefits and home and community-based supports for dual-eligibles (Medicare and Medicaid recipients) and:

- To avoid nursing home care when possible
- To improve care coordination and patient outcomes

Looking forward, the health system in San Mateo County plans to work to address the impacts stemming from a growing number of older adults with²

- Chronic illness
- Need for link to primary care
- Need for link to medication management, care coordination
- Cultural awareness across the health care setting
- Need for greater housing options for low income older adults

To do so, it has initiated a series of steps, including

- Focused effort across the Health System and Community Partners to build residential alternatives for low low-income, medically fragile older adults
- Collaborative work with HPSM to link older adults to primary care
- Seek evidence-based “best practices” for care coordination, evaluation methods, and expansion of coverage
- Engage community partners in the preparations for the aging population.

² Programs, Initiatives and Planning for the Aging Community in San Mateo County by Lisa Mancini, Director, Aging and Adult Services, August 14, 2012.