

# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

www.slocounty.ca.gov/coa.htm  
slocommissiononaging@gmail.com



*Maryanne Zarycka, Co-Chair  
District 1 Representative*

*Paul Garth  
District 2 Representative*

*Anita Shower, Co-Chair  
District 3 Representative*

*Vacant  
District 4 Representative*

*Shirley Summers  
District 5 Representative*

*Mardi Geredes  
Member at Large*

*Roger Randall  
Member at Large*

*Shannon McOuat  
Member at Large*

*Anne Wyatt, Membership  
Member at Large*

*Brittany Venia  
Member at Large*

*Emi Taylor  
Area Agency Aging Council*

*Teri Elliott  
SLO County Mental Health*

*Karen Jones  
Long Term Care Ombudsman*

*Tom Clough  
Senior Volunteer Services*

*Anna Devers  
Senior Service Provider*

*County District Attorney Rep*

*County Social Services Rep*

*Michelle Blanc  
Alternate Member at Large*

*Mara Whitten  
Alternate Member at Large*

*Jerry Mihaic  
Alternate Member at Large*

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors  
Government Building  
1055 Monterey, Room D430  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Dear Chair Arnold and Supervisors Compton, Gibson, Hill and Peschong:

We are pleased to submit to you the annual report for 2018-19 of the San Luis Obispo County Commission on Aging. In accordance with our mandate, we are reporting to you our progress in achieving the SLOCOA Goals and Priority Issues for 2018-19.

Throughout the fiscal year we continued to meet monthly (except for December) at the SLO Veterans Hall until March 2019 when we had to move to a large conference room at the Department of Social Service, 3433 South Higuera, because of repairs being done to our usual venue. We are happy to report that attendance by the public did not seem to suffer because of this move, since considerable publicity was given to interested parties via flyers and Facebook about the change in location.

Our Commissioners serve without pay and are chosen for their knowledge and ability to represent diverse groups of Seniors throughout the county and in our various cities. Additionally, we are pleased that four of you have chosen to send a representative from your district to serve on the Commission. They are joined by representatives of the Area Agency on Aging, Senior Volunteer Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and similar groups.

The Commission's longtime Chair, Kathleen Bellefontaine, retired from the Commission at the end of January 2019, and co-Chair Roger Randall opted to continue as a member at large. They have been replaced by co-Chairs Maryanne Zarycka and Anita Shower.

***Goal 1: Increase public awareness on critical issues facing an expanding Senior population: Communicate information on Senior services, working to inform the Senior community of services available to them.***

We continue to utilize our Facebook account to provide information on Commission activities, and to highlight both practical and educational opportunities offered by various groups throughout the county which are designed to appeal to Seniors. As more and more baby boomers reach Senior status, they increasingly rely on social media such as Facebook to stay up to date in areas of interest to them.

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We have an ever-expanding email distribution list of people and agencies interested in our speaker presentations and informational fliers. Communication of these events and items is periodically sent out as received by the co-Chair. We established (and publish) a Commission email account which agencies and the public may use to request information, ask questions, or forward information pertinent to Seniors. We also post our meetings on the Tribune's electronic website.

Electronic materials for printing and posting are distributed throughout the county via the Commission email to Senior centers, Senior living facilities, libraries, Senior newsletters and the like, in an effort to reach those who are unable or choose not to rely on the internet for information.

Unfortunately, Tolosa Press, which published biweekly newspapers designed to reach three separate areas of the county via newsstands, and which carried a column authored by one of our Commission members about Senior issues, ceased operation during the year.

Perhaps the most effective means of communicating matters of interest to the Senior community is accomplished by the speakers we feature at each of our monthly meetings. As you can see, the list of subjects presented during the year is broad, timely, and relevant to Seniors and those involved with caring for them:

## **July 2018**

*Dementia Care and Community Resources*

## **August 2018**

*Senior Substance Abuse: Issues and Services*

## **September 2018**

*California's Senior Care Crisis: Long-term Trends and Critical Needs*

## **October 2018**

*Predatorial Scams Targeting Seniors*

## **November 2018**

*Where Shall I Go When I Need More Help? Independent Living and Care Facilities Described*

## **January 2019**

*Food for Seniors: Nutrition for Body and Soul; and Availability of Legal Assistance to Seniors*

## **February 2019**

*In-Home Support Services in SLO County*

## **March 2019**

*Safe and Secure Memory Care Living*

## **April 2019**

*Navigating the last leg of the Journey: Hospice Medical and Support Services*

## **May 2019**

*Members and Public Brainstorming Session – Hot Topics and Goals for COA 2020*

## **June 2019**

*Passion for Independence: Living Independently*

**Goal 2: Advocate for seniors on those critical issues with the Board of Supervisors, private and local government sectors, and through partnerships with service organizations as well as in the community as a whole.**

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While both the leadership and members of the commission undertook advocacy regarding numerous Senior issues in the community during the year, our strong thrust involved working with affordable building coalitions, private developers, your Board, and others in the community to urge that more effective ways be found to make affordable housing available to Senior members of the community who represent a growing percentage of the population, and a disproportionate number of whom have little access to appropriate living quarters at an affordable cost. The Commission selected the following Priority Issues to be pursued during the fiscal year:

- *Scam Education*
- *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness and Education*
- *Affordable In-Home Care Services*
- *Senior Nutrition Program*
- *Senior Long-Term Care*

The Commission's May 2019 Brainstorming meeting was attended by agencies and the public who were all welcomed and encouraged to participate. The COA Brainstorming Session was devoted to recognizing and establishing Hot Topics and Priority Issues to be addressed during the coming fiscal year. The result was the following list of ideas and issues, in order of rank:

## **1. Outreach**

- a. Communicating information to the Senior population.
- b. Providing tech support for computers and cell phones.
- c. Educating and encouraging Seniors to use technology (including tech abstainers).
- d. Provide information forums, social/support groups and include transportation to and from the events.

## **2. Transportation**

- a. Senior GO! Program
- b. Education on how to use shuttles and buses (see 1).
- c. Address 'holes' in Senior Transportation Services (shuttle/bus times, coverage).
- d. Transportation for out of county medical
- e. Establish a 'buddy' system.

## **3. Financial Support**

- a. Identity theft and scams updates and info
- b. Assist/advocacy for banking, auto pay, online, at bank.
- c. Assist/advocacy with benefits (Medicare, SSI, SSDI, Vets, etc...).
- d. \$\$ for in-home care and caregivers

## **4. Home Support and Maintenance**

- a. Disaster preparedness (education and preparation)

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- b. Case management/budget management, assist with bill paying
- c. Outreach and services for very poor and isolated Seniors
- d. Installation of safety fixtures (home security lights, alarms, ramps, grab bars...).

## 5. Medical

- a. Case management/advocacy at doctors' offices and emergency
- b. Rx education, management, lethal/dangerous interactions, overdoses
- c. Nutrition, exercise, physical activity

The Commission will continue to advocate for and educate Seniors during the new fiscal year, confident of the continued support of the members of the Board of Supervisors. We thank you for your support.

Most sincerely,

*Maryanne Zarycka*

Maryanne Zarycka  
SLOCOA Co-Chair

*Anita Shower*

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SLOCOA Co-Chair