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CONTACT: Carmen Estrada,
(800) 675-6694 ext. 119
cestrada@inlandcaregivers.org

LOCAL COMMITTEE TO HELP CREATE ‘RURAL MASTER PLAN FOR AGING’

Listening Sessions to Elevate Unmet Needs, Help Identify Actionable Solutions

The Inland Empire Long Term Services and Supports Coalition, along with key regional partners, is developing an Inland Empire - Master Plan for Aging (IE - MPA) to help Riverside and San Bernardino Counties better serve older adults in the community, with a focus on those who live in rural areas. Currently, 15.4% of Inland Empire residents are aged 65 and older, and, over the next two decades, this age group will experience the highest growth rate of any other age group in the region. The IE - MPA will complement the statewide Master Plan for Aging - a 10-year blueprint for promoting healthy aging and supporting quality of life that was launched on January 1, 2021, by the California Department of Aging.

The Inland Empire - Master Plan for Aging will include an action plan focused on optimizing health and wellness of older adults, improving access to housing and transportation, and supporting family caregivers. The plan will be developed in response to community input, gathered through focus groups that reflect diverse geographic locations and sub-groups, and informed by local aging services providers.

An IE-MPA Advisory Committee has been formed to spearhead this process. The committee currently includes representatives from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, the Inland Empire Health Plan, Inland Caregiver Resource Center, Community Access Center, and the Alzheimer’s Association. This project is being supported by The SCAN Foundation, an independent public charity devoted to transforming care for older adults in ways that preserve dignity and encourage independence.

Judith Martinez, Senior Program Manager with the Alzheimer’s Association, California Southland Chapter, has been actively connecting with partner agencies to support participant recruitment for focus groups. When asked why a local Master Plan for Aging is needed, Judith shared, “The IE – MPA will help us mobilize the community to increase awareness about all the resources available to older adults, it also will help us identify the gaps and find solutions.”

“The State’s Master Plan for Aging offers a unique opportunity for local organizations to work together to make significant impacts on the health, safety, and well-being of older adults in our communities,” states Gary Robbins, Deputy Director of the Riverside County Office on Aging. “Because the Inland Empire has its own culture, challenges, and opportunities, the development of a cohesive, locally-focused Master Plan for Aging has great potential to guide future efforts and services in the region, and to reflect the voices of Inland Empire residents.”

The IE-MPA Advisory Committee welcomes participation from diverse community members and stakeholders. To learn more, visit ieltss.org or contact mpa.inlandempire@gmail.com.

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Formed in 2008, the Inland Empire Long-Term Services and Supports (IE LTSS) Coalition brings together the expertise of diverse health care entities, community-based organizations, public officials, and stakeholders to better serve older adults and people with disabilities in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The Coalition is committed to facilitating systems change across networks and developing improved integrated care and service delivery of long-term services and supports.