



## *Capitol Desk*

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### **Longtime Battle Continues for Senior Care**

by David Gorn

Few details changed in Governor Jerry Brown's budget, from the time it was proposed to when the Legislature passed it. So the salvaging of the state's Adult Day Health Care program from the budget wreckage could be seen as a sign of the long-term care system's tremendous popularity and support.

Now, the Senate Committee on Health has moved along a new bill seeking to improve long-term care in California.

"There are many people in long-term care facilities who often want to stay home, or return home quickly after surgery," according to Senate member Carol Liu (D-Pasadena), who authored the bill. "We do have many services to help them still. But for the most part, the aged and disabled must navigate these services on their own."

Liu hopes to change that with SB 21, which is a reintroduction of last year's SB 998, which remained in committee last year. The idea, Liu said, is to help match seniors and the disabled with services designed to help them.

"Each service might require its own assessment," Liu said, "and have its own offices. This **bill** is a major step toward establishing an integrated system of long-term care, with case management in some cases."

The bill provides case management and transition services for some people who may want to return home, and leave expensive facilities such as skilled nursing facilities. It sets up a system to assess what those individuals might need, and it establishes better data, so that state budget planning can be more efficient.

"We're looking for the best placement, rather than the placement of last resort," Liu said. "We're trying to get people home where they want to be. And we're trying to save the state money."

Gary Passmore of the California Congress of Seniors said the lack of a unified approach has been a long-term problem in California.

"Really, it's not a system right now," Passmore said. "It's a fractured network of individual services." The Committee on Health voted to move the bill to the Committee on Appropriations.