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California Association for Adult Day Services

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Media Statement

Administration Fumbles Effort to Notify Medically Fragile Seniors, Disabled Adults and their Families about the State's Elimination of Adult Day Health Care

(Sacramento, CA) – In a statement today, California Association for Adult Day Services Executive Director Lydia Missaelides blasted the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for major missteps and continued insensitivity in transitioning California's most medically at-risk seniors and disabled adults out of Adult Day Health Care. On August 18, DHCS sent a confusing letter to dually eligible (Medi-Cal and Medicare) ADHC patients notifying them the Adult Day Health Care benefit will end as of December 1, and that they have until September 16 to move into a managed care plan. The letter gives less than a month for ADHC patients to enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care health plan with no indication the plan will provide them with "ADHC-like" services. Deciding not to enroll is not an option – those who fail to enroll will be placed into a managed care plan selected by the state. Missaelides said:

"We are dumbfounded, disappointed and increasingly angry that the state and its agencies continue to fumble their way through the unconscionable elimination of the Adult Day Health Care program. The latest example of the state's ill-conceived 'transition plan' continues to demonstrate the state's serious lack of understanding about the needs of patients served in ADHC. ADHC patients suffer from Alzheimer's, mental illness and other debilitating diseases and are culturally and linguistically diverse. Thirty days is not enough time to learn about their local managed care health plans, compare what they offer and make a selection. If our patients fail to navigate this confusing process, the state will select a Medi-Cal managed care plan for them, even if they already are enrolled in a Medicare managed care plan known as Medicare Advantage. And, while the state continues to claim that these patients can disenroll from managed care at any time, the letter does not provide instructions about how to do so.

"We are frustrated that the state did not have the foresight to ask for our input nor the courtesy to share its notification letter with ADHC providers in advance so they could be ready for the onslaught of questions and concerns they are getting from anxiety-ridden patients and their families.

“DHCS Director Toby Douglas recently told a legislative panel that the notice would be written at a ‘low-reading level’ so patients, their families and their caregivers would understand it. However, the DHCS letter is so confusing that even those of us with years of health care experience cannot be sure what action is required. ADHC centers and providers are now inundated with questions from terrified and confused elderly patients who do not know what this notice means.

“If this patient notification effort is an example of how the state plans to transition 35,000 medically fragile seniors and disabled patients out of Adult Day Health Care and into managed care programs, our serious fears for the health, safety and welfare of those we have long served and know so well are completely justified. Transitions are challenging under the best of circumstances. To expect this medically fragile population to understand and sort through the myriad of complex and confusing options, with such a hastily thrown together process and timeframe, is inexplicably cruel.”

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To access a copy of the letter that the Department of Health Care Services sent to Adult Day Health Care patients, go to <http://DHCS.ca.gov/ADHCtransition>

A Senate Budget Committee hearing on issues surrounding the elimination of ADHC programs is slated for 1:30 pm on Thursday, Aug. 25 in Room 127 of the State Capitol. Scheduled to speak are Diana S. Dooley, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency; representatives from state departments; representatives from managed care plans operating in San Francisco and Los Angeles; Lydia Missaelides, CAADS executive director; and Adult Day Health Care center providers.