



The Honorable Adrin Nazarian
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

February 28, 2021

RE: AB 523 (Nazarian)– SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Nazarian,

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) writes in strong support of Assembly Bill 523, which would require the CA DHCS to make PACE program flexibilities developed during COVID 19 permanent. CARA is California's largest grassroots advocacy organization, representing over 1 million members through our 300+ affiliated organizations. PACE is very important to our members.

Existing federal law establishes the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), which provides specified services for older individuals at a PACE center, as defined, in part, as a facility that includes a primary care clinic, so that they may continue living in the community. Federal law authorizes states to implement the PACE program as a Medicaid state option.

Existing state law establishes the California Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE program), to provide community-based, risk-based, and capitated long-term care services as optional services under the state's Medi-Cal State Plan, as specified. During the COVID 19 pandemic, PACE programs had to adjust their programs and services in order to continue to provide the care needed for their clients and offer these services remotely and through home visits and other methods. Many of these adjustments have been quite successful, and even when PACE is able to come together at a specific site again, some of these new ways of offering care should be able to continue when appropriate.

AB 523 would require the department to make the specified PACE program flexibilities instituted on or before January 1, 2021 in response to the state of emergency caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) through all-facility letters, or other similar instructions taken without regulatory action permanent. The bill would require the department to work with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to determine how to extend PACE flexibilities approved during the COVID-19 emergency.

For all these reasons, CARA urges support of AB 523.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Hene Kelly".

Hene Kelly
CARA Legislative Director