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DIVERSE LEADERS PROPOSE AGING CARE REFORMS

Convergence Publishes Collection of Papers in "Supplement to Rethinking Care for Older Adults"

Washington, DC – Convergence Center for Policy Resolution, a nonpartisan, bridge-building organization that convenes leaders to solve intractable issues, released a compendium of 15 proposal-papers to expand and improve long-term care options for seniors through administrative action. The papers in Convergence’s "Supplement to Rethinking Care for Older Adults" were authored by an ideologically diverse group of leaders and experts on caregiving for older adults.

The papers stem from ideas included in "Rethinking Care for Older Adults," Convergence’s report on a series of collaborative "brainstorming" conversations convened in late 2020 with nearly 50 experts. Ideas focused on expanding opportunities for home and community-based care, advancing alternative business models in the institutional sector, and transforming the caregiving workforce.

Many of the proposals in that report require legislation or changes in business practice, but others could be advanced, at least in part, by administrative or regulatory actions. To more fully develop these administrative actions toward execution, Convergence invited experts from the original conversations and other leaders to flesh out their ideas, including specific administrative and regulatory language. The resulting "Supplement" comprises a collection of 15 articles that provide "a menu of ideas" for changes at the federal, state and local level that do not require intervention by Congress and will help remove outdated restrictions and business and payment models that inhibit innovation.

The Supplement is organized into three sections, including ideas to: (1) Make It Easier to Age at Home, (2) Strengthen and Increase the Range of Nursing Facilities, and (3) Strengthen and Increase the Caregiving Workforce.

"There is an urgent need to modernize long-term care housing and services to meet the needs of aging Americans and their caregivers," said Stuart Butler, Senior Fellow in Economic Studies at The Brookings Institution and a Convergence Board Member who convened the report authors. "The innovative ideas in this report are designed to give older Americans more choices about where they live and how they receive care."

Experts agree that an overhaul of the current long-term care system is urgently needed as the country braces for seismic shifts in the number of older adults who need care and fewer family caregivers to provide it. Urban Institute data shows that 70% of people aged 65 and over require

long-term care services during their lifetime, and 24% of older adults need paid care for more than two years.

The debate over how to revamp elder care was reignited when President Biden proposed, and Congress began to consider, allocating \$400 billion to increase access to care for older adults, reportedly the largest expansion of long-term care support since the 1960s. While Biden's proposal would rely on the expansion of Medicaid, the 2016 recommendation of the *Long-Term Care Financing Collaborative* convened by Convergence calls for a public catastrophic insurance-based financing system that would help strengthen private insurance and better enable people of all incomes to receive high quality long-term care services.

A number of dialogue participants from the *Financing Collaborative* returned to participate in the conversations Convergence convened for "Rethinking Care for Older Adults."

"Especially in light of the decimation wreaked by COVID-19 in America's nursing homes, addressing unmet needs and inequities in long-term care is a critical issue that requires timely and innovative solutions," said David Eisner, CEO of Convergence. "We believe these proposals will spur productive conversations at the federal, state and local levels about the future of care for older adults."

The engagement of leaders and production of the reports "Rethinking Care for Older Adults" and the "Supplement to Rethinking Care for Older Adults" were funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation. The ideas and recommendations expressed in both reports solely reflect the views of the authors and not the views of Convergence.

Building on the momentum from these reports, The John A Hartford Foundation and The SCAN Foundation recently announced new grants totaling over \$500,000 to Convergence for a new *Convergence Dialogue on Reimagining Care for Older Adults* to further explore innovations in the care of older adults in nursing homes and the range of settings they call home.

About Convergence

Convergence is a national non-profit based in Washington, DC that convenes individuals and organizations with divergent views to build trust, identify solutions, and form alliances for action on issues of critical public concern. Reports and recommendations issued under our auspices reflect the views of the individuals and organizations who put the ideas forward. Convergence itself remains neutral and does not endorse or take positions on recommendations of its dialogue participants. <https://convergencepolicy.org/>

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