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Convergence Launches New Dialogue on Advancing Age-Friendly Care for Older Adults

Diverse group of leaders and experts to examine reform solutions

Washington, DC – Convergence Center for Policy Resolution (Convergence), a nonpartisan collaborative problem-solving organization that convenes leaders across sharp political, ideological, sectoral, and other divides to solve intractable issues, announces the launch of a year-long project to forge consensus policy solutions to help aging adults thrive. The [Convergence Dialogue on Reimagining Care for Older Adults](#) will bring together a diverse group of leaders and experts on aging and caregiving for older adults to explore innovative ways to reform and improve care in nursing homes, help more people age at home, and expand the direct care workforce.

While most adults desire to age in their own homes and communities, they often lack access to necessary care, support, and accommodations. Meanwhile, others who need institutional care cannot afford it. That leaves many older adults in the United States spending their later years in situations that are not best suited to their desires or level-of-care needs. The Dialogue will explore different models of care and potential reforms to care regulations and payment systems to advance innovation in care in different settings and increase home-based care options for older adults. The group will also examine the coordination of health, social services, transportation, housing, and other nonmedical factors that influence health and happiness.

“The reality is that a lot of older adults are in nursing homes because they can’t access care assistance any other way,” said Stuart Butler, Convergence board member, senior fellow at The Brookings Institution, and chief investigator for this Dialogue. “It’s time to reimagine what aging care could look like in the future to give older adults more choices in where they live and how they receive care and thrive late in life.”

Since living well while accessing long-term services and supports depends on a robust care workforce in the places where people live, the Dialogue will seek consensus on ways to better support and encourage careers in direct care work and care by family, friends, and communities. Participants will center their focus on the needs, values, and preferences of older adults. Specifically, the Dialogue will focus on the following areas outlined in the [Issue Framing Paper](#):

- **Home-based Aging and Community-based Care:** How can providers and communities shift toward more home- and community-based services given the differences in the capacity of communities to be the source of care, individual care needs, and alignment of payment systems?
- **Residential Facilities:** How can innovations in business models and new investment lead to more viable and varied institutional settings?
- **Access Issues:** How can we better address disparities in the levels of service affected by factors such as geography, gender, race, income, and access to technology?
- **The Care Workforce:** How can improvements to workforce training and career pathways improve the quality of aging care, expand the direct care workforce, support family caregivers, and address the continuing shortage of direct care workers?
- **Payment Issues:** How can health and long-term care funding and the allocation of care costs be better coordinated to help older adults age at home rather than in nursing homes?

The *Convergence Dialogue on Reimagining Care for Older Adults* is co-funded by [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#) and [The SCAN Foundation](#).

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made policymakers and the public keenly aware that we must profoundly rethink and restructure our systems of long-term care,” said Terry Fulmer, president of The John A. Hartford Foundation. “The Convergence process will help us seize the moment to reach [actionable policy solutions](#) that help all of us age with dignity.”

“The [future system of care](#) must meet the needs of older adults in an equitable and person-centered way that ensures their values and preferences are met,” said Dr. Sarita A. Mohanty, president and CEO of The SCAN Foundation. “This project is a critical first

step to gather leading experts in order to reach consensus and build momentum for real transformation.”

The Dialogue builds on two prior reports on long-term care. In 2020, Convergence convened multiple meetings of nearly 50 experts on aging and caregiving for older adults to brainstorm on the practice, policy, and business model changes needed to transform the system of care and the range of institutions. The conversations generated ideas for expanding opportunities for home and community-based care, advancing alternative business models in the institutional sector, and transforming the caregiving workforce.

In December 2020, Convergence published a report, “[Rethinking Care for Older Adults](#),” summarizing the series of conversations. Following that report, Convergence invited participants in the earlier conversations and other experts to expand on the ideas in the report that focused specifically on administrative actions and reforms to improve aging care. The resulting recommendations were compiled in a series of independently authored papers titled “[Supplement to Rethinking Care for Older Adults](#).”

About Convergence Center for Policy Resolution

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. Learn more at: <https://convergencepolicy.org>

About The John A. Hartford Foundation

The John A. Hartford Foundation, based in New York City, is a private, nonpartisan, national philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. The leader in the field of aging and health, the Foundation has three areas of emphasis: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregivers, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care. Learn more at: <https://www.johnahartford.org/>

About The SCAN Foundation

The SCAN Foundation is an independent public charity dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. Our mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. Learn more at: <https://www.thescanfoundation.org/>

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