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Statewide Poll: Vast Majority of California Voters Favor Candidates for Governor with Plan to Serve State's Fast-Growing Senior Population

West Health and The SCAN Foundation Launch "We Stand With Seniors...Will You?" Awareness and Education Campaign

(San Diego, CA) – More than two-thirds of California voters feel the state is not prepared to address the health and social service needs of its fast-growing senior population, and that sentiment could sway votes in the race for governor, [according to a new poll](#) commissioned by two California-based senior-focused nonprofit organizations. California is heading for a crisis in caring for its older population if the state and next governor do not act now to create effective and cost-efficient policies.

In proportions rarely seen in statewide opinion research, more than 80 percent of California voters say that when it comes time to vote, they are more likely to support a gubernatorial candidate who has a plan for aging Baby Boomers and seniors that effectively addresses their growing demand for healthcare, dental and social services.

"Now is the time for California to stand with our rapidly growing senior population," said Shelley Lyford, CEO and president of [West Health](#). "It's time for candidates running for governor and other statewide offices to develop a concrete plan to provide for the healthcare needs of vulnerable seniors. And it's time for voters to hold politicians accountable at the ballot box in November."

According to the [Public Policy Institute of California \(PPIC\)](#), the state's 65-and-older population is projected to grow nearly 90 percent, or by four million more people, by 2030, which spans the next three gubernatorial terms.

"In a time when we see so much political polarization, it's encouraging to see that California Democrats, Republicans and independent voters of all ages can all agree on one thing: We need to provide better care for our older adults," said Bruce Chernof, MD, CEO and president of [The SCAN Foundation](#). "Now we must work together to enact policies and create an environment that reflects our shared commitment to the well-being of older Californians."

This poll comes as West Health and The SCAN Foundation launch "[We Stand With Seniors...Will You?](#)" a public awareness and education campaign on the specific challenges seniors and their families face in accessing high-quality, affordable healthcare, dental care and supportive services and the cost to the state if these challenges are not addressed.

In the months leading up to the election, the campaign will convene seniors, advocates and policy makers for educational forums throughout the state and conduct periodic surveys on how well the gubernatorial candidates are addressing the issues.

Summary of Poll Findings

- 67 percent of voters feel that **California is NOT prepared to care for its aging population.**
- 87 percent of voters agree that providing dental care for seniors is as important as access to healthcare.
- 83 percent of voters would be more likely to **support a gubernatorial candidate who has a vision and a long-term investment plan to address the increasing demand for senior services for California's aging population.**
- 82 percent of voters are more likely to **support a gubernatorial candidate committed to making high-quality healthcare for seniors more accessible and affordable.**
- 80 percent of voters **support the state investing in caregiver programs that assist those who care for senior family members.**
- 79 percent of voters **support the state making in-home healthcare service investments that allow seniors to age successfully in place, including medication delivery, telehealth and house calls.**

The poll also showed voters want state legislators to support seniors. Eighty-two percent are more likely to support legislative action that improves seniors' access to dental care, a benefit Medicare does not provide. Voters also want to see improvements in independent living services, mental and behavioral health and other senior services.

"California can lead the country on aging and senior issues, just as it has on so many other issues," said Tim Lash, chief strategy officer of West Health. "There is tremendous support for it across the state. Now we need a governor who will tap into that support and prioritize the needs of California's aging population now and into the future."

Survey Methodology

From Friday, January 12, 2018 through Sunday, January 15, 2018, J. Wallin Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey of voters throughout California. One thousand voters were interviewed using live, professional interviewers, speaking both English and Spanish languages and calling both mobile and landlines. The sample is stratified (the demographic composition of our results matches the demographic composition of the state's voting population) and has a margin of error of +/-3.1 percent (95 percent confidence interval).