

CCoA
California Commission on Aging

AGEWATCH

Urgent Need for Emergency Preparedness to Ensure the Safety of all Long-Term Care Consumers

*Statement of the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
September 20, 2017*

The death of 9 nursing home residents* in Florida in the wake of Hurricane Irma is tragic and sad. As the events in Hollywood and North Miami Beach unfold, it is a reminder of the vulnerability of long-term care facility residents, and older adults needing care and services in their own homes.

This situation provides a hard lesson about what it means to be prepared for an emergency, and the need to be vigilant about monitoring the adequacy of those plans. We know that elders are particularly susceptible to dehydration and heat, and they are acutely vulnerable in times of disaster. As Florida officials investigate this terrible situation, we call on all communities to reassess their preparedness for, and ability to respond to, emergency situations.

From the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to state and local officials, power and energy companies, and long-term care providers themselves, there is an urgent need to reassess standards and procedures for both prevention and response to emergencies.

Our staff will continue to stay in close contact with our network in impacted states, and follow the reports on investigations and recovery to identify best practices and lessons learned in order to improve the emergency preparedness process to ensure the safety of all long-term care consumers.

For more information about emergency preparedness, visit (the Consumer Voice) [issue page](#).

Reprinted with permission from the [National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care](#).

*As of September 29th, 12 residents of the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills near Ft. Lauderdale had died. Update from the [Washington Post](#).



AGEWATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834. (916) 419-7591

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TACC elects new leadership for 2017– 18

The Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council of California— known as TACC — elected new officers during annual elections in August.



Gloria Sanchez

The 33-member organization has chosen Gloria Sanchez of Menifee to serve as President, and Elizabeth Busick of Mission Viejo as Vice President for the coming year. Outgoing chair Eileen Bostwick of Ukiah will serve as Immediate Past President on the three-member Executive Committee.

All members of TACC are either elected leaders of their local Area Agency on Aging advisory councils or their designee. TACC is an informal organization administered by the California Commission on Aging. The group meets four times a year in Sacramento to learn about program and policy changes affecting Ar-



Elizabeth Busick

ea Agency on Aging services, and to network and share local innovations and concerns.

TACC is supported by the **California Seniors Special Fund** tax check-off line 400 on your state income tax return.

Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15

The annual Open Enrollment period for Medicare health and drug plans runs from October 15 through December 7 this year. During open enrollment Medicare beneficiaries can make changes to their Part D prescription drug plans or their Medicare Advantage coverage. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has updated information, including a Part D cost-sharing chart, and a listing of all CMS notifications recipients will receive by mail regarding their Medicare coverage, and other valuable resources. To access NCOA's Open Enrollment resources, [click here](#).

Information from the National Council on Aging.

Financial Inequality: Disability, Race and Poverty in America

A new report from the National Disability Institute (NDI) studies the connections between disability, race and poverty in the United States. The report examines the prevalence of disability by race, the changing rate of disability by age and race, and the impact of race and disability on educational attainment, employment, banking status, health insurance, medical debt, and food insecurity. The report finds that African Americans are more likely to have a disability than any other demographic group, and nearly 40 percent of African Americans with disabilities live in poverty, as compared with 24 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.

[Click here](#) to read the report.

NASUAD Friday Update -
September 29, 2017

“It is often said that disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty and poverty and disability reinforce each other, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion. Various factors and influences affect the relationship between race, poverty and disability.”

From Financial Inequality: Disability, Race and Poverty in America

What is Hollywood's Take on Aging?

**Guest Editorial by
Carla Gardini**

A work in progress, which like most everything in Hollywood, is probably the best way to respond to the ongoing concern of how authentically or stereotypically filmmakers portray older adults.

In recent years, audiences have experienced complex and diverse older adult characters in films such as “The Intern,” “Philomena,” “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel,” and “Danny Collins.” But despite their ageless themes of purpose, family, love, and ambition, these “mature” films are few and far between.

Movies depicting older characters, portrayed by older actors, and intended for adult audiences are increasingly difficult to get made. Studios are making fewer movies, in general. Their business model has shifted. While the domestic box office is still an important measure of a film's success, the international box office, particularly China, is perhaps the strongest determinant of which movies get the green light and how large their production and marketing budgets will be. The reality is, comic book and action movies, which prioritize spectacle over story, transcend language and therefore “travel” better overseas.

The good news is we're living in the Golden Age of Television. The proliferation of distribution channels, especially subscription-based platforms like Netflix and Amazon that don't rely on ad dollars, has given rise to programming that is more nuanced and inclusive. In a medium that is no longer hostage to the broadest possible audience, it's no surprise that storytellers have turned to the small screen to push creative boundaries and take chances on challenging subject matter.

Consequently, shows with seemingly limited audiences, like “Atlanta,” “Master of None,” and “Queen Sugar” have been well-received with critics and audiences alike. And the success of these shows is not in spite of their cultural or ethnic diversity, but *because* of it.

Relatability is paramount when it comes to storytelling. For far too long, Hollywood has narrowly defined “relatable” as whatever looks and sounds like the majority of Americans (i.e. whites from the middle of the country). In reality, when it comes to relatability, what matters most is theme. Hollywood can always do better, but television has made considerable progress in tackling issues and disparities of race, gender, and sexual-orientation. And considering the old Hollywood adage, “Every story is a coming-of-age story,” diversity of age should be an obvious goal, too.

Recently, we've seen progress in breaking down stereotypes and expanding arbitrary boundaries with shows like Netflix's “Grace and Frankie” and Amazon's “Transparent.” You may not be a widowed woman in her 70s, but surely you've known the pain of lost love and the profound healing ability of friendship. You may not be a 70-year-old transgender woman, but surely you can *relate* to feeling uncomfortable in your own skin

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Helen Mirren (R) and Manish Dayal in “*The Hundred Foot Journey*”

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and wanting a fresh start in life. Growing old is anything but typical; it should be portrayed with the same sort of complexity that makes younger characters interesting.

Even NBC, the network that brought us “Golden Girls” more than 30 years ago, is getting back in the aging game. The broadcaster recently announced a pilot commitment to “Guess Who Died,” a half-hour comedy set in a retirement village, produced by 95-year-old TV pioneer, Norman Lear. The prolific creator of shows like “All in the Family,” “Sanford and Son,” and “Good Times” said he wrote the show “because we are so underrepresented.”

I believe the best storylines featuring older characters approach aging naturally and do not make it necessarily central to the plot. In industry parlance, “show, don’t tell” is a more impactful way to portray older adults as multi-dimensional, with pursuits and passions and purpose just as younger generations. Nobody likes the idea of growing *old*, but knowledge, experience and wisdom are traits we can all rally behind.

For example, Harpo Films produced for HBO “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,” in which Oprah Winfrey starred. Her character was complicated, relatable and inspiring. And very real, so much so that Oprah explained in *Parade* magazine she felt humbled by the role and was obliged to face her own maturity. “I don’t like the word ‘old,’ because the language you give yourself often starts to define the way you see or think of yourself,” she observed. “I use the words ‘growing with age’ or ‘evolving.’”

Let’s not forget that some of the biggest stars in the world are chronologically “seniors.” But you’ll never attract Meryl Streep or Denzel Washington or the seemingly ageless Helen Mirren, who I worked with on “The Hundred-Foot Journey,” to play characters defined solely by their age.

The entertainment industry has informed our culture for the better by realistically addressing racism and sexism, among other injustices. When Sidney Poitier received his honorary Academy Award in 2002, he credited the writers and directors whose determination and artistry created great stories and roles. “They knew the odds that stood against them. Still those filmmakers persevered, speaking through their art to the best of all of us.”

I am hopeful past and current successes will encourage more risks and produce more rewards for storytellers who boldly take on ageism. It makes both social and economic sense for Hollywood to acknowledge our population is growing older faster than any time in history.

So, my take on Hollywood and aging is this: As television continues to break ground and pave the way for content that authentically depicts older adults, film will hopefully follow its lead. Ultimately, everyone will benefit from the coincidence of creators making good and doing good.



Oprah Winfrey, at right, and Rose Byrne in “*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*”

Carla Gardini is Executive Vice President of Harpo Films. Her producer credits include the films “The Hundred-Foot Journey” and 2017 Emmy nominee “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks”; along with current OWN TV series “Queen Sugar” and “Greenleaf.”

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The Aspen Institute *Economic Opportunities Program* and *Health, Medicine and Society Program* cordially invite you to attend the next webinar in their *Working in America* Series...

The Caring Economy: How to Improve Service and Work in the Long-Term Care Industry



Thursday, October 12
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 PT
Register for the livestream

[here](#)

The US Census estimates that in 2050 the population aged 65 and over will be 83.7 million, almost double its estimated population in 2012, and the surviving baby boomers will be over the age of 85. As the United States ages, direct care workers, such as home care aides and certified nursing assistants, will become essential to many more families. Yet these workers tend to be low-paid and poorly trained and receive little respect for the critical work that they do. Is such a workforce capable of addressing the needs of our aging population? How can we improve the quality of work and healthcare services in an industry of growing national importance?

Join us for a lunch-time panel discussion on work and care in the long-term care industry, the next event in our [Working in America](#) series. The panel discussion will be preceded by opening remarks from MIT Economist Paul Osterman about his new book, *Who Will Care for Us?* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2017), in which he demonstrates the importance of restructuring the long-term care industry and establishing a new relationship between direct care workers, patients, and the medical system. Webinar registration is available [here](#).

Upcoming Events

October 4 - 6, County Welfare Directors Association of California Annual Conference, Sacramento Convention Center. For information and registration, click [here](#).

October 26, The Scan Foundation Long-Term Services and Supports Summit, Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento. Click [here](#) for more information.

November 7 - 8, California Commission on Aging regular meeting, Bahia Hotel, San Diego. Meeting schedules and agendas available [here](#).

November 14 - 16, C4A Annual Meeting & Allied Conference, Sheraton Gateway Hotel, L.A. Details and registration available [here](#).

December 7, End Well - Design for the End of Life Symposium, Intercontinental San Francisco Hotel, San Francisco. For information or to register, visit the [Institute on Aging](#).

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