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Alameda County
Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

For Immediate Release
Press Release

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**Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson Presents
Planning and Caring Forum in Oakland**



Photo: Supervisor Keith Carson welcomes residents to the Planning and Caring Forum at the North Oakland Senior Center.



Photo: Community members listen to speakers at the Planning and Caring Forum at the North Oakland Senior Center.

At a free series of workshops and panels on Saturday, April 28, 2012 at the North Oakland Senior Center, Supervisor Keith Carson and representatives from local senior centers, elder care organizations and technology companies provided Alameda County residents with resources to help seniors and their caregivers plan for the future.

“As the average age of the population increases, the importance of a caregiver becomes increasingly significant,” said Supervisor Carson. “Advances in medical care and technology are now allowing more elders to age in place. We need to support the family members and friends who are taking responsibility for caring for our aging loved ones.”

The Planning and Caring for Aging Loved Ones Forum was attended by more than 150 community members and featured two panels focused on important topics and trends in the senior community. During the “Aging in Place” panel, Andra Lichtenstein from the Ashby Village in Berkeley described the “volunteer first” support network that allows elders to remain in their homes and receive services to help with transportation, house repairs, shopping and other daily tasks. “Volunteerism is at the heart of the village model,” said Sandra Davidson of the North Oakland Village. Their office in the Rockridge shopping center is an intergenerational hub for community members to offer mutual support and referrals.

John Damonico of the Center Elders Independence described their Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) health plan for seniors age 55 and older who remain at home but need additional support because of health problems. “Seniors live a more fulfilled life” with the PACE program, Mr. Damonico explained, “because they get to stay at home with their family, speak their own language and also get the support they need.”

Technology experts from Vital Link and American Baptist Homes of the West presented the attendees with information on the latest medical alert systems that can detect not just falls but also whether a loved one has taken her medication or is sleep walking. Audience members shared their frustration with today's complicated computer and mobile technologies, which often confuse seniors with technical terminology and lackluster customer service.

"Everyone needs an advocate," Srinoi Rousseau told the attendees at the workshop on planning for legal issues. Ms. Rousseau is an attorney with Camp Rousseau Montgomery, LLP and an expert in helping families prepare powers of attorney and trusts. Pay attention to the details and make sure you appoint someone who you can trust with your financial and medical affairs, she advised the attendees.

Delane Sims of Senior Moments shared with the participants in the "Healthy Eating and Living" workshop her father's secret to good health and longevity. "What is his secret to living to 113? Laughing," she said. "He loves to tell a joke. He is surrounded by people who love him and give him respect."

In addition to the panels and workshops, 18 community businesses and organizations provided participants with valuable information that attendees took home with them to begin the planning process.

California's elderly population is expected to reach 12.5 million by 2040, an increase of 232% from 1990. Over the next twenty years, the senior population in Alameda County is projected to grow by 23.5%; the fastest growing segment of this senior population are those 85 years of age and older, according to the California State Department of Finance.

According to a 2009 study conducted by the AARP Public Policy Institute, approximately 42.1 million family members in the U.S. provided care to an adult with limitations in routine activities. In 2009 dollars, the value of those unpaid caregiving hours was approximately \$450 billion.

The Planning and Caring Forum was sponsored by Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Alameda Alliance for Health, Kaiser Permanente and the Socially Responsible Network.

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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit <http://www.keithcarson.org/>