



Event Summary Report: *The Power of Aging – Navigating Services in Times of Uncertainties*

September 19, 2025 | Vermont Corridor, Los Angeles, CA

Overview

The Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Aging Caucus convened *The Power of Aging* event to commemorate National HIV and Aging Awareness Day bringing together consumers, service providers, advocates, and community members to discuss challenges and opportunities for older adults living with HIV. The program highlighted lived experiences, provided practical resources, and offered strategies to strengthen empowerment and resilience in times of uncertainty.

Program

The event opened with a land acknowledgment and welcome by Aging Caucus Co-Chairs Kevin Donnelly and Dr. Paul Nash. Theodore Smith, President of the Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults, delivered remarks that set the tone for the day, emphasizing the importance of community and resilience.

The opening session featured a consumer panel of older adults living with HIV who shared personal accounts of navigating healthcare systems, overcoming stigma, and finding empowerment through advocacy and education. Their experiences underscored the importance of peer support, the need for continued education, stronger service networks that support person-centered care and the value of consumer voices in shaping care for older adults living with HIV.

The provider panel, which included representatives from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the County's Aging and Disabilities Department, APLA Health, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, and the Inner City Law Center, responded to issues raised in the consumer session. Panelists discussed strategies for accessing local services, addressed systemic barriers, highlighted the impact of funding cuts that require innovative strategies to ensure continuity of essential programs, and stressed the importance of cross-agency collaboration.

During lunch, the Center for Healthcare Rights led an engaging session Medicare basics. The session provided attendees with practical knowledge to better understand healthcare coverage options and benefits available to them.

The day concluded with a presentation from the Executive Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at California State University Long Beach on lifelong learning as a path to self and



community empowerment. She emphasized education as a tool for resilience, mental well-being, and continued growth at every age.

Key Takeaways

Several themes emerged from the event:

- **Lived experiences matter:** Consumer advocacy remains vital to creating responsive and inclusive systems of care. Consumer voices highlighted resilience and the ongoing need for advocacy and culturally relevant HIV care.
- **Collaboration is critical:** Collaboration between service providers and community members is essential to overcoming structural barriers and address service gaps. Providers emphasized partnership across health, legal, and community services to ensure older adults have access to resources despite funding challenges.
- **Knowledge builds resilience:** Education, whether through healthcare navigation or lifelong learning, empowers older adults to advocate for themselves and their communities. Sessions reinforced that both healthcare literacy and lifelong learning play a vital role in personal and community empowerment.
- **Sustainability is urgent:** Funding cuts threaten critical programs, making advocacy for continued resources more important than ever. The event closed with a clear call for ongoing engagement, advocacy, and resource development to meet the evolving needs of older adults aging with HIV.