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LeadingAge California Releases New Report Highlighting Gaps in Emergency Response Systems for Older Adults During Wildfires

Sacramento, CA —LeadingAge California today announced the release of its new report, ["Addressing Gaps in Emergency Response Systems for Older Adults Impacted by Wildfires,"](#) examining how emergency preparedness, response, and recovery systems can better serve older adults during disasters.

The report, authored by Tamiza Z. Teja, MPH, CPH, Founder & Principal of TZT Consulting, comes in response to the devastating January 2025 wildfires in Los Angeles County, which forced large-scale evacuations and exposed critical challenges faced by older adults, senior housing communities, and long-term care providers.

Older adults are disproportionately impacted during disasters due to mobility limitations, chronic health conditions, reliance on medications and durable medical equipment, and increased vulnerability to smoke exposure and trauma. Despite these realities, emergency response systems are not always designed to meet their needs.

Drawing on research and firsthand accounts from older adults and their care providers who survived the wildfires, the report identifies key gaps in current emergency response systems and offers actionable recommendations to improve outcomes for older adults.

"Disasters do not affect all populations equally," said Jeannee Parker Martin, President and CEO, LeadingAge California. "This report gives us a roadmap to intentionally design emergency systems that account for the unique needs of older adults. As climate-driven disasters increase in frequency and intensity, the urgency of this work cannot be overstated."

The report outlines strategies to:

- Improve evacuation planning and coordination;
- Strengthen continuity of care during displacement;
- Address staffing and transportation barriers;
- Enhance communication and coordination across systems, and;
- Advance policy solutions to better protect older adults.

The report was made possible through the generous support of [The SCAN Foundation](#) and [UniHealth Foundation](#), whose leadership has been instrumental in advancing solutions that improve care and outcomes for older adults.

“At The SCAN Foundation, we are committed to advancing systems that ensure older adults can age well at home and in their communities, especially during times of crisis,” said The SCAN Foundation President and CEO Sarita Mohanty, MD, MBA, MPH. “This report highlights critical opportunities to strengthen emergency response systems to better meet the needs of older adults when it matters most.”

“UniHealth Foundation is proud to support efforts that strengthen the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. This report provides critical insights and actionable solutions to better protect older adults during disasters,” commented Jennifer Vanore, PhD, President and Chief Operating Officer of UniHealth Foundation.

The report will be officially launched during a webinar hosted by LeadingAge California on March 31, 2026, from 1:00–2:00 PM PT, where the author and providers who experienced the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires will discuss key findings and lessons learned.

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About LeadingAge California

Founded in 1961, LeadingAge California is the Western Region's leading advocate for mission-driven housing, care, and services for older adults, with over 800 members across the California, Hawai'i and Nevada, including providers of affordable senior housing, residential care facilities for the elderly (assisted living), life plan communities, skilled nursing care, home and community-based services, home health, and hospice care.