



West Health's Shelley Lyford appointed to California Commission on Aging

SAN DIEGO – May 08, 2019 – [Shelley Lyford](#), the president and CEO of nonprofit, nonpartisan [West Health](#), has been appointed to the [California Commission on Aging \(CCoA\)](#) by the Senate Rules Committee, with President pro Tempore of the California State Senate [Toni Atkins](#) leading the appointment as chair of the committee.

“I am honored to join the Commission to advocate for seniors across California and help create the state’s first Master Plan for Aging,” Lyford said. “We are at a pivot point in our history when, for the first time, [seniors will soon outnumber children](#). We need to act now to improve our healthcare and social services to prepare for this important generational shift. I am thankful to California Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins and the Senate Rules Committee for this opportunity to work with the Commission to ensure California is ready to help our seniors age successfully.”



Lyford has been the chief executive at West Health for four years and has led Gary and Mary West’s philanthropic endeavors to lower healthcare costs and improve care for seniors since its inception in 2006. She has worked tirelessly to advance the organization’s mission through a combination of applied medical research, policy, advocacy, and outcomes-based philanthropy.

Lyford led West Health’s development of several innovative models for senior healthcare, including [launching the Gary and Mary West Senior Dental Center for low-income seniors in 2016](#) and [opening the Gary and Mary West Senior Emergency Department at UC San Diego Health in 2019](#). Under her guidance, the Gary and Mary West Foundation awarded 518 grants totaling more than \$211 million for healthcare research and social services for seniors and their caregivers. Lyford also serves as vice chair of the board of directors for [Civica Rx](#), a not-for-profit generic pharmaceutical company that will help address drug shortages and lower the high prices of lifesaving medications.

West Health has been a strong advocate for senior-focused issues, and under Lyford’s leadership, the organization spearheaded the successful [“We Stand With Seniors ...Will You?”](#) nonpartisan public awareness campaign with The SCAN Foundation that called on policymakers and gubernatorial candidates’ to pledge to develop a Master Plan for Aging in California. [Gov. Gavin Newsom announced his plan to create a Master Plan for Aging](#) at his 2019 State of the State address.

[California is home to more than 5.1 million seniors now](#), making up 13 percent of the state's residents — a percentage that is expected to grow to [19 percent of the population by 2030](#), creating an even greater demand for senior-appropriate health and supportive services.

The California Commission on Aging was established in 1973 and is comprised of 25 commissioners representing diverse fields related to aging—19 appointed by the Governor, three appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and three by the Senate Rules Committee. All commissioners serve three-year terms as volunteers. The organization is responsible for advising the state's governor and legislature, along with federal, state and local agencies, on issues, policies, and regulations that affect California's seniors. It works closely with public, nonprofit and private-sector institutions to address emerging challenges and opportunities fundamental to ensuring healthy, purposeful and dignified longevity for all Californians.

About West Health

Solely funded by philanthropists Gary and Mary West, [West Health](#) is a family of nonprofit and nonpartisan organizations including the [Gary and Mary West Foundation](#) and [Gary and Mary West Health Institute](#) in San Diego, and the [Gary and Mary West Health Policy Center](#) in Washington, D.C. West Health is dedicated to lowering healthcare costs to enable seniors to [successfully age](#) in place with access to high-quality, affordable health and support services that preserve and protect their dignity, quality of life and independence. Learn more at westhealth.org and follow [@westhealth](#).

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