



# The National Center

for Complex Health and Social Needs

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HEALTHCARE CONSUMERS FURTHER THE FIELD OF COMPLEX CARE, HELP FIND SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

*Patients, providers, policymakers, and more come together to design a new field of care*

Putting Care at the Center 2017, the second annual conference of the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs, continued today, bringing a broad range of professionals and participants from the field of complex care to downtown Los Angeles. The day was marked by healthcare consumer participation. Clinicians, researchers, social workers and policymakers came together with the people they serve to co-design better approaches to complex care. The conference, co-hosted by Kaiser Permanente, kicked off yesterday with a cocktail reception, and the full agenda began today.

**Consumer leadership** was the focus of the lunchtime plenary session, featuring a slate of experts including Leandra Ross, Senior Director of the Southcentral Foundation in Alaska. “Consumer participation should not be an afterthought,” said Ross. “When an organization listens to the voice of the customer owners, systems and outcomes will improve and reach excellence.”

The Southcentral Foundation, run by and for the Alaska native community, provides integrated, relationship-based care where consumers are re-envisioned as “customer-owners.” Its results exemplify the promise of complex care: between 2000 and 2015, Southcentral reduced both emergency room use rates and hospital admissions by 36 percent.

Complex care consumers have multiple chronic health conditions and face complex social barriers such as isolation, homelessness, or a history of trauma. People with complex health and social needs are often part of the five percent of health care consumers nationwide who account for 50 percent of health care expenditures. When they lack access to ongoing care to control their chronic conditions, they land repeatedly in the hospital and emergency room, racking up enormous bills while experiencing poor outcomes. The field of complex care aims to build on best practices like those of the Southcentral Foundation to improve care for this population.

More than 600 attendees at Putting Care at the Center got the chance to help design the emerging field of complex care by taking part in the **Complex Care Blueprint** project, which



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launched today at the conference. The Blueprint is an ambitious, year-long initiative to coalesce the field of complex care. The Blueprint will map the current and potential players in the complex care field and distill the priorities and goals of the movement. At the conference, participants drew up their own blueprints with their thoughts on the core tenets of complex care, the biggest challenges they have experienced, priority areas of focus, goals, and who they think is missing from the conversation.

The Complex Care Blueprint is a joint project of the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs, the Center for Health Care Strategies, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. The Blueprint is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, and The SCAN Foundation.

Twenty four grant-funded complex care consumers and support staff from associated nonprofit organizations attended Putting Care at the Center 2017. The consumer attendees put their expertise as care recipients and advocates to work in a “CoDesign” workshop led by staff from Kaiser Permanente. In the workshop, complex care consumers worked together with providers and other attendees to design an ideal health care plan or intervention for individuals with complex health and social needs.

“Partnering with our consumers is invaluable for creating programs and services that matter to them,” said Ioulia Kachirskaia, PhD, a lead of the CoDesign approach at Kaiser Permanente. “We are thrilled to welcome so many consumer partners to this conference; their expertise and engagement is invaluable.”

“I struggled in the streets as a homeless person in Chicago,” said Rodney Dawkins, one of the complex care consumers at the conference, and a consumer advocate at Heartland Alliance. “This caused a lot of physical problems and vulnerability— I was looked at as an outcast. Using a support system I was able to overcome a lot of obstacles. I'm a walking, talking miracle. When consumers participate in their care everybody wins.”

### **About the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs**

*The National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs, launched in 2016, aims to improve outcomes for patients with complex medical, behavioral, and social needs. The National Center works to coalesce a new field of healthcare by bringing together a broad range of clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and consumers who are developing, testing, and scaling new models of team-based, integrated care. The National Center and its staff collaborate with other experts across the nation to develop best practices, inform policy, and foster an engaged and accessible community to develop this work and teach it to others.*

*The National Center's founding sponsors are the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and AARP, and it is hosted by the [Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers](#).*



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