

## Dignity at Home and Fall Prevention Program

**Position:** Support SB 280 (Jackson) that provides home modification supports for people with disabilities and seniors at risk of falling

**To maximize safety and mobility, people living with MS sometimes find it necessary to modify their homes.**

- ❖ MS can impair muscle strength, sensation, balance, coordination and gait, and cause significant disabling fatigue, increasing the likelihood of a fall.
- ❖ More than 50% of people with MS report falling down in a 3-to-6 month period, and 30-50% have fallen multiple times in the same time frame.
- ❖ Home modifications adapt living spaces to meet the needs of people with physical limitations.

**Home modifications are crucial, but also prohibitively expensive.**

- ❖ Cost for modifications—from simple installation of a grab bar in the shower to building a ramp into a home or widening doorways—can range from \$100 to \$50,000.

**There are numerous benefits associated with providing home modification assistance.**

- ❖ Modifications allow a person to keep a connection to a job, maintain quality of life, and remain active in the community.
- ❖ Allowing people to remain in their home safely and independently—accruing savings to the healthcare system -- prevent falls/injury and premature residential nursing care.
- ❖ The Centers for Disease Control estimates that falls are the most preventable cause of nursing facility placement.



### **SB 280 would:**

- Require the CA Department of Housing and Community Development to develop and propose for adoption by the CA Building Standards Commission, building standards requiring fall prevention structural features in single and multifamily dwellings to prevent falls.
- Require the Department of Aging to contract with Area Agencies on Aging to provide injury prevention information, education and services to enable older adults and persons with disabilities to live independently in their homes.
- Allow older adults and persons with disabilities who have fallen or are at risk for falling, or who are at risk for institutionalization and who otherwise could not afford the purchase of home modification items, to be eligible for the fall prevention program.