



## CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee November 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held in-person (California Department of Aging: 2880 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833) with a remote option.

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**Members attending in person:** Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Carlos Olivas III, and Claire Day

**Members attending remotely:** Sally Bergman, Barbra McLendon, William Mobley, Faisal Qazi, Julie Souliere, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, Celine Regalia, Jason Gravano for Sarah Tomaszewski Farias, Lauren Babich for Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, and Carmen Ayon for Senator Arreguín

**Members absent:** Myra Garcia, Kenneth Graffeo, Sarah Tomaszewski Farias

### Call to Order: Welcome and Introductions, August Minutes

- *Carlos Olivas, Committee Vice Chair*

Claire Day moved to approve the August 2025 minutes. Sally Bergman seconded the motion. All members attending voted in favor of approving the minutes. No opposition or abstentions.

### Opening Remarks

- *Kim Johnson, Secretary, California Health & Human Services Agency (CalHHS)*
  - Secretary Johnson thanked all committee members for their commitment to supporting individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia, family members, and caregivers,
  - Secretary Johnson recognized November as Alzheimer's Awareness and National Family Caregiver month.
  - Alzheimer's Awareness Month is dedicated to highlighting the importance of early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, as well as supporting caregivers and families affected by the condition.
  - National Family Caregiver Month lifts-up and honors our family caregivers with more than 7 million adults in California providing care to a family member or friend with complex medical conditions or disabilities.
  - The Master Plan on Aging is a guiding light. California counts on the Master Plan for Aging (MPA) advisory committees to keep us grounded in our local communities that may be impacted due to changes in federal and state policy.
  - Secretary Johnson discussed California's longstanding commitment to the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Conditions Advisory Committee (ADRCAC), established within the California Health and Human Services Agency in 1988, to provide ongoing advice and assistance on program needs and priorities of persons impacted by Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

# Honoring Alzheimer's Awareness and National Family Caregivers Month

## Part I: Dementia Care Essentials: A Guide for Family Caregivers

- *Dr. Jason Gravano, Associate Clinical Professor, University of California San Francisco – Fresno*
  - Dr. Gravano provided information on his teams' pilot caregiver training program for unpaid caregivers of those with dementia. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) tasked them (UCSF-Fresno and Valley Caregiver Resource Center) with prioritizing caregivers in Northern California.
  - They wanted to make a program that is free and accessible and does not require caregivers to have prior knowledge of dementia care. They also wanted the program to be available in different languages and be relevant to diverse cultures.

### Committee Discussion

- A committee member asked if GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) programs would be interested in this kind of training for caretakers. Dr. Gravano stated that he is optimistic that there will be some integration with existing systems and other pilot programs but doesn't yet know to what extent or ways this program will be picked up.
- A committee member discussed the challenge of getting caregiver support information to the public.

## Part II: Caregiver Resource Centers (CRC)

- *Michelle Nevins, Executive Director, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center (CRC)*
  - Michelle discussed how California CRCs are advancing family support statewide, highlighting federal grant efforts, key partnerships, and program goals.

### Committee Discussion

- A committee member asked how local community aging service organization can partner with CRCs. Michelle stated that, for her, a phone call or an email works best. She also advised that they should reach out to their local CRC director for more information.
- Another committee member asked if the CRCs are able to meet the current need for respite care. Michelle stated that it depends on several factors including what grants are coming in and if there are federal dollars available. For example, last year Del Oro CRC was able to serve 90% of clients, but this year there are challenges due to loss of funding such as Mental Health Services Act funding. The number of monthly requests for services exceeds the ability of the CRC staff to complete intakes.

## Part III: Empowering California's Care Workforce

- *Theresa Weaver, Project Director, Division of Policy, Research, and Engagement, California Department of Aging (CDA)*
  - Theresa provided an update on empowering California's care workforce initiative which focuses on strengthening workforce training, recruitment, and retention across the care continuum.
  - Theresa provided an update on the CalGrows (California Growing a Resilient, Outstanding Workforce in the Home and Community) initiative and program outcomes.

- An update was provided on the CalCARES (California Caregiver Awareness Resources Education and Support) program. CalCARES is funded through a grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to help advance state implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers. The CalCARES program expires in October of 2026.
- One of the purposes of CalGrows was to develop and launch a curated catalog of free training in threshold languages for public use by family caregivers and direct care workers to meet the education and training needs of California's diverse caregivers. CalCARES builds on the work done through CalGrows to increase access to high quality training for caregivers.
- ACL also awarded California 250 hours of subject matter expert technical assistance through the Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center State Advancement Lab (SAL). The technical assistance hours will support the Bridging Aging and Disability Network initiative by developing a training curriculum focused on the needs of older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), targeting Direct Support Professionals, direct care workers, and family caregivers serving individuals with I/DD.

## **Part IV: Elevating the Voices of Family Caregivers**

- *Dan Salinger, Family Caregiver*
  - Dan provided an overview of his caregiving journey with his 93-year-old father who is in the advanced stages of dementia and what led to him eventually becoming his father's main caregiver.
  - Dan also discussed the positive benefits of being a caregiving and that it has opened up a door to a world of empathy and compassion for others in similar situations.

## **Committee Updates**

- *Carlos Olivas, Committee Vice Chair*
  - An update was provided on the recruitment for new ADRCAC members. The committee is also moving forward with targeted recruitment for two new committee members who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other related dementias. All new committee members will begin their terms in 2026.
  - The 2026 meeting schedule has been finalized and will be sent to committee members. The meetings will now be three hours instead of four hours.

## **Public Comment Period #1**

- Members and guests discussed the unique issues facing male caregivers. Examples of male caregiver groups and meetings were given by some of the committee members and guests.

## **30 Minute Break**

## **Legislative Update**

- *Barbra McLendon, Public Policy Director, Alzheimer's Los Angeles*
  - An overview was provided on bills signed by the Governor.
  - Updates were provided on the status of state policies and legislative bills that impact individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias and caregivers.
- *Andrew Mendoza, Director of State Affairs, Alzheimer's Association*  
The presentation included current bills being sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association.

## State Updates

- *Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging*
  - Susan shared that the Governor issued his proclamation acknowledging and recognizing Alzheimer's Awareness Month.
  - The updated 2025-2029 Older Americans Act (OAA) State Plan has been submitted to ACL and was approved. ACL highlighted California's work with family caregivers which is a priority area of focus with ACL and the US Health and Human Services Agency.
  - CDA has partnered with the UC Davis Family Caregiving Institute to align California's efforts with the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers including developing a caregiver equity map.
  - CDA is working to implement SB 1249 as part of the California 2030 initiative. CDA has been doing research and stakeholder engagement to make modifications to Area Agency on Aging services with a focus on strengthening information and assistance, senior nutrition, and caregiver supports.

## Public Comment Period #2

- None.

## Finalize Recommendations and Items for CalHHS Secretary

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair and committee members*
  - Recommendations include:
    - Committee members recommended sustaining funding and services for caregiver services and support including CRCs, respite services, and caregiver mental health supports.
    - Raising awareness that some Managed Care Plans are deciding to eliminate certain Community Supports including Respite Services, Environmental Accessibility Adaptations, and Community Transition as of January 2026. The Committee wants to elevate the importance of these services.
    - Development of caregiver training and resources in multiple languages and specifically focused on enabling caregivers to practice empathy and compassion.
    - Supporting male caregivers including through peer support networks and outreach campaigns.
    - The Committee expressed concerns with the reduction of Mental Health Services Act funding for local Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs. The Committee emphasized the importance of the Behavioral Health Services Act and the need for local funding for PEI services for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.
    - The Committee identified a need to study and better understand persons with dementia who live alone, as minimal information is available on current management strategies and unmet needs.

## Closing Comments

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
  - The committee chair and vice chair thanked the committee for their continued commitment to Alzheimer's and dementia and family caregivers.
  - The committee discussed topics for future meetings including:
    - Mental health services landscape and changes to ensure older adults have better access to behavioral health services.
    - Elder abuse, frauds, and scams.
    - Isolated older adults, including a deep dive into those living alone.

## Upcoming Meeting Dates

- Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 5, 2026
- Committee meetings will be held in-person in Sacramento with a Zoom option.

## Resources and Materials Shared in Meeting Chat and PowerPoint Presentation

- [CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee ADRCAC](#) webpage
- [Meeting Materials & ADRCAC Member Biographies](#)
- [Master Plan for Aging](#) webpage
- [MPA Implementation Tracker](#)
- [California Department of Aging \(CDA\)](#)
- [CA2030: A Future-Ready California Aging Network](#)
- [CalCARES - California Caregiver Awareness, Resources, Education & Support Program](#)
- [Cal Grows - CDA's Direct Care Workforce Initiative](#)
- CDA's Upcoming Events calendar can be found on [CDA's homepage](#).
- To receive news and opportunities for engagement from the California Department of Aging and the Master Plan for Aging, subscribe to [CDA's newsletter](#).
- Comments may be submitted after the meeting via email to [Engage@aging.ca.gov](mailto:Engage@aging.ca.gov).