

## 2025 IMPACT Stakeholder Committee Member Biographies

**Eric Dowdy, MPPA** is the Vice President of Public Policy (CA & NV) for the Alzheimer's Association. In this role, he leads and supports Nevada and the five California chapters (California Southland, Central, Northern California/Northern Nevada, Orange County and San Diego/Imperial) in their year-round advocacy program to achieve positive legislative, budgetary, and regulatory changes on behalf of individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias. Eric is the statewide representative of the Alzheimer's Association at the capitol in CA and serves as primary point person to the Governor's Administration, State Legislature, key departments, and the broad health, aging and disability stakeholder community.

**Melinda Forstey, MBA** is the Chief Operating Officer and President/CEO Designate for Serving Seniors. Serving Seniors is a nonprofit organization in San Diego, California, serving low-income older using an innovative model of whole-person, wraparound support including meals, housing, health and social services, and lifelong learning. Melinda has championed changes in policies and legislation affecting seniors in San Diego, California, and the nation. Melinda's efforts have had a significant impact with expanding senior nutrition programs, providing affordable housing options and expanding a nationally recognized senior wellness model. Melinda serves as the Chair-Elect on the Board of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP), a leading organization advocating for a wide range of essential services and policies for senior health and wellbeing.

**Christina Mills** is the Executive Director of the California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) and the first woman to hold this role. With over 25 years of leadership in disability rights and aging services, she is dedicated to advancing equity, choice, and quality of life by bridging the aging and disability communities. Christina has held pivotal roles at Independent Living Centers and the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), where she launched innovative programs, including California's first statewide emergency preparedness initiative and Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRCs). A passionate advocate for youth with disabilities, she founded YO! Disabled & Proud and has earned national recognition for her mentoring and advocacy.

**Sarita Mohanty, MD, MPA, MBA** serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of The SCAN Foundation, one of the largest foundations in the United States focused entirely on improving the quality of health and life for older adults. Its mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. Prior to joining SCAN, Sarita served as the Vice President of Care Coordination for Medicaid and Vulnerable Populations at Kaiser Permanente. Sarita was

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previously Assistant Professor of Medicine at USC; Chief Medical Officer of COPE Health Solutions, a health care management consulting company; and Senior Medical Director at L.A. Care, the largest U.S. public health plan.

**Carolyn Nava** serves as Community Relations Director for the Disability Action Center (DAC), a nonprofit Center for Independent Living (CIL) founded in 1980 to meet specific needs of people with disabilities living in Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama Counties, and an eastern portion of the Trinity County community. Ms. Nava assists DAC with local, and statewide public relations, publicity, and helps ensure DAC team quality service delivery, information and resources to people with disabilities, their care providers, and the public. In her capacity as a 20+ year multi-state licensed financial professional, she helps the CIL with resource development, grant relations and grant report preparations. Ms. Nava also chairs the Center's nine-county flagship Systems Change Activity, the Diversability Advocacy Network (DAN) that is currently promoting the region's designated Aging and Disability Resource Connection and supporting the far north state Local Master Plan for Aging Advisory Committee

**Rafi Nazarians** serves as Advocacy Director managing AARP CA's Advocacy Team. He oversees Federal and State advocacy efforts and advises AARP teams throughout the state on local advocacy issues. He leads AARP CA's innovative housing strategy and works closely with California Legislative Leadership, elected and administrative officials, and stakeholders to pass housing bills to increase the production of more affordable and accessible housing to address CA's severe housing crisis. Rafi also manages AARP CA's growing Network of Age-Friendly States & Communities (NAFSC), including relationships with each of the current 101-member jurisdictions representing over 28 million California residents. Rafi previously worked for U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer where he focused on health policy advocacy and managed field operations in Los Angeles County, Ventura County, and Santa Barbara County.

**Linda Nguy, MPP, MBA** is the Associate Director of Policy Advocacy at the Western Center on Law and Poverty, specializing in health care issues that affect Californians with low incomes. Prior to joining Western Center, Linda worked with the States of Washington and Mississippi to help establish their state-based health exchange. She also worked on California's behavioral health adjudication system and as Policy Associate for the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California.

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**Yasmin Peled**, Director of California Government Affairs for Justice in Aging, joined the organization in 2022 to lead California advocacy in Sacramento. She works to advance Justice in Aging's legislative and budget priorities in California on issues related to health care, long-term services and supports, housing, economic security, and elder justice. Yasmin also coordinates Justice in Aging's engagement in California's Master Plan for Aging. Prior to joining Justice in Aging, Yasmin was Senior Policy and Legislative Advocate at Health Access California with a focus on issues related to health care industry regulation and cost containment. Yasmin got her start in advocacy coordinating a mobile health care clinic for homeless individuals in Santa Cruz County. Yasmin holds a Master's Degree in Health Policy and Law from UC Law SF/UCSF and a BS from UC Santa Cruz.

**Rigo J. Saborio, MSG**, is the President and CEO of Archstone Foundation. Rigo brings over three decades of expertise in aging services, spanning public policy, diversity initiatives, administration, and direct service. Most recently he served as Vice President of Programs, Equity, and Community Impact at SCAN Foundation. In this role, Rigo oversaw the Foundation's efforts around community engagement strategies and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to ensure all older adults receive the services and supports they need to age well. Rigo's career also includes 13 years as Chief Executive Officer of St. Barnabas Senior Services in Los Angeles and eight years with AARP, culminating as a Director of Diversity Outreach and Alliances for AARP's National Office. He also served six years as Director of USC's Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center and worked as a staffer on the U.S. Select Committee on Aging for the U.S. House of Representatives. Rigo holds a Master of Science in Gerontology from the USC Davis School of Gerontology. He also completed a bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences at the California State University, Los Angeles.

**Tiffany Whiten** is Senior Government Relations Advocate for the California State Council of Service Employees (SEIU CA), which represents over 700,000 working people in California. Ms. Whiten has been with SEIU California for nine years. During this time, Ms. Whiten has helped to establish SEIU as a leading advocacy, political and policy organization on matters affecting a wide range of workers in every sector of government including but not limited to, long term care which consists of In Home Support Services (IHSS), Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), as well as social services and public safety. Ms. Whiten also advocates for over 400,000 long term care workers, primarily home care workers. Ms. Whiten is a member of the California Master Plan for Developmental Services, the California Developmental Services Taskforce and The Long Term-Care Insurance Taskforce. Prior to joining SEIU

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California, Ms. Whiten was an advocate with Niemela Pappas and Associates, as well as worked in the Legislature for 8 years for various legislative leaders including Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata, Senator Loni Hancock, Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett and Senator Mark DeSaulnier.

**Heather M. Young, PhD, RN, FAAN** is distinguished professor at the University of California Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. She co-leads the Healthy Aging in a Digital World initiative and co-directs the Family Caregiving Institute at UC Davis Health. She is immediate past-chair and member of the board of the Archstone Foundation. Young is a nationally recognized expert in gerontological nursing and rural health care, researching healthy aging with a particular focus on the interface between individuals, family and formal health care systems. Her research includes studies of family caregiving and policies that support older adults and persons with disabilities to remain in their environment of choice. She was a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the California Master Plan on Aging and co-leads evaluation of several California programs supporting older adults and their caregivers.