



CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee May 7, 2026, Meeting Minutes

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

Members attending in person: Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Carlos Olivas III, Jeanine Walter-Misirli, and Kate Schulenberg

Members attending remotely: Barbra McLendon, William Mobley, Faisal Qazi, Julie Souliere, Rhiannon Mulligan for Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, Stephanie Navarette, Jerry Jew, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, Claire Day, Sarah Tomaszewski Farias, Sally Bergman and Munir Moon

Members absent: Senator Jesse Arreguin, Tony Gonzales, Celine Regalia

Call to Order: Welcome and Introductions, February 2026 Minutes

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
 - An update on ADRCAC member recruitment was provided.
- Committee Members – Two new committee members were welcomed and introduced. One new member was at the meeting and the other was not present.

Claire Day moved to approve the February 2026 minutes. Dr. Mobley seconded the motion. The new committee member abstained from the vote. All remaining members in attendance voted in favor of approving the minutes without opposition.

Opening Remarks

- *Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging (CDA)*
 - Director DeMarois informed the committee that May is Older Americans Month and the theme from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) is "Champion Your Health." We are also celebrating Older Californians Month. The theme is "Start the Conversation."
 - The May Budget Revision has been released by the Governor's office.
 - CDA furnished a Supplemental Report of the 2025-26 Budget on California's No Wrong Door system and Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRC) to the legislature as requested by Assembly Member Corey Jackson. The report can be found on the CDA homepage.
 - The RAISE Family Caregiver Act has declared that family caregiving is a top national priority.
 - California is pursuing a "Health at Home Challenge" grant via the Make America Healthy Again program.

Older Adult Behavioral Health

Part I: Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults

- *Carla Perissinotto, MD, MHS, University of California San Francisco (UCSF)*
 - Carla discussed the impact that isolation and loneliness can have on older adults.
 - In explaining some of the main definitions related to isolation and loneliness, she clarified the differences between social connection, loneliness, and social isolation.
 - She discussed how loneliness is measured.
 - Carla also provided facts and figures of the impact isolation and loneliness has on older adults as well as how losses (death, mobility impairment, health, etc.) can be predictors of isolation and loneliness.

Committee Question and Answer (Q&A) and Discussion

- A committee member asked if there were any studies that have looked at various social interventions to reduce loneliness.
 - Carla stated that the evidence of interventions is mixed because of measurement issues in the field. She also advised that her team at UCSF has conducted research on interventions.

Part II: Living Alone with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

- *Elena Portacolone, PhD, MBA, MPH, Professor, Institute for Health & Aging, UCSF*
 - Elena discussed her qualitative research on mild cognitive impairment and older adults who live alone and have dementia.
 - She provided facts and figures related to her research on people with cognitive impairment who live alone.
 - Elena also provided her recommendations on increasing access to home care aids by expanding Medi-Cal eligibility and creating a state-funded program for older adults.
 - Information on the Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) program was presented.

Committee Q&A and Discussion

- One member pointed out the challenges with the In-Home Support Services (IHSS) program serving people with cognitive impairment along with budget constraints.
- The group discussed different pathways and programs towards supporting older adults with dementia who are living alone as this population continues to grow.
- A suggestion was made to have the California Surgeon General declare loneliness a public health issue as has already been done at the national level.

Part III: Elevating the Voices of Individuals with Dementia and Caregivers and Behavioral Health

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
- *Carlos Olivas, Committee Vice Chair*
 - Carlos shared his experience as a caregiver of his father and how isolation and loneliness affect him personally.
 - He also discussed potential ideas on how the medical system can help caregivers through their caregiving journey.

Committee Q&A and Discussion

- Several other committee members shared their experience dealing with the challenges of being caregivers.
- A member suggested forming a task force around stemming loneliness for caregivers.

Part IV: Understanding the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)

- *Ana Acton, Assistant Deputy Director, CDA Division of Policy, Research, and Engagement*
 - Ana provided an overview of the modernization of the behavioral health delivery system and explained the two legislative bills that were created in Proposition 1 (BHSA and Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act)
 - BHSA provides new state-level funding to implement a behavioral health workforce initiative, led by the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) as well as providing new state-level funding to advance statewide population-based health initiatives, led by the Department of Public Health (CDPH).
 - Outcome measures for BHSA will be managed by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).
- *Barbra McLendon, Associate Vice President, Public Policy, Alzheimer's Los Angeles*
 - A local (Los Angeles County) perspective on BHSA implementation was provided including concerns service providers who are working with older adults will have to reorganize how they deliver services, what services they're going to be able to continue to deliver going forward, and what programs they will no longer be able to provide, with older adult prevention services under the Mental Health Services Act being eliminated.
 - Barbra also discussed the limitations of the managed care system to meet behavioral health needs as well as difficulties in knowing how to access mental health services under managed care plans.

Legislative Updates

- *Tina Fung, Chief, Alzheimer's Disease Section, CDPH*
 - Tina provided updates on CDPH resources including funding for the California Healthy Brain Initiative and 10 California Alzheimer's Disease Centers. She provided projection updates related to a report on Alzheimer's prevalence through 2050. She hopes the report will be published by the next ADRCAC meeting in August.
- *Barbra McLendon, Public Policy Director, Alzheimer's Los Angeles*
 - Updates were provided on the status of state policies and legislative bills that impact individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias and caregivers.
 - Legislation discussed included research funding, genetic information and access to insurance, healthcare and caregiver legislation, emergency preparedness, and barriers to HR-1 implementation.
- *Andrew Mendoza, Director of State Affairs, Alzheimer's Association*
 - The presentation included current bills being sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association.
 - Topics of sponsored bills include healthcare coverage for Alzheimer's treatment, Dementia Care Aware budget request, "Good Cause" for a prosecutor to receive a continuance for dependents or older adults when needed in court for other obligations and when they are a victim in the alleged offense, healthy aging, requirements for long term care facilities, and data collecting and reporting

requirements for the California Neurodegenerative Disease Registry Program.

Public Comment

- There were no comments from the public.

Finalize Recommendations and Items for CalHHS Secretary

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
- Committee members
 - Recommendations include:
 - Guidance or a request of DHCS to see robust outcome measures for BHSA related to older adults.
 - A specific focus on finding effective methods of reducing loneliness and isolation in older adults.
 - More investing in California research on the impact of loneliness and testing individual cases to eliminate social isolation.
 - Partner with other state agencies to create solutions for loneliness and isolation.
 - Not relying on the use of AI and robots to solve the problem of loneliness and isolation.
 - More programs to pair older adults with younger people.
 - Have Medi-Cal pay for adaptive equipment to help get older adults more socially involved.
 - More training and fundamental research on how to care for the caregiver.
 - Elevate loneliness and isolation and make it a priority in California.

Closing Comments, Upcoming Meeting Dates, and Next Steps

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
 - The committee chair and vice chair thanked the committee for their time and thoughtful participation and for another productive meeting.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 7, 2026.
- Committee meetings will be held in-person in Sacramento with a Zoom option.

Resources and Materials Shared in Meeting Chat and PowerPoint Presentation Master Plan for Aging (MPA)

- [CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee](#)
- [ADRCAC Member Biographies](#)
- [Online Application for ADRCAC Member](#)
- [Health at Home Challenge](#)
- [No Wrong Door Report](#)
- [Fifth MPA Annual Report](#)
- [California Department of Aging \(CDA\)](#)
- [California Department of Aging: Older Adult Behavioral Health Resources for Stakeholders](#)
- [California Friendship Line](#)

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.