

## Alzheimer's Disease and Related Conditions Advisory Committee - Member Biographies (January 2025)

### Catherine Blakemore, Chair

*Family Member Representative (March 2025)*

Catherine Blakemore has worked as an attorney and director, in legal aid and disability advocacy programs for 40 years. She retired as the executive director of Disability Rights California, the non-profit agency established under federal law to protect and advocate for individuals with disabilities. In 2016, she received the Loren Miller Legal Services Award, given annually to a lawyer who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to legal services.

Ms. Blakemore is dedicated to increasing equal rights and opportunities, access to services, and dignity for Californians with disabilities and individuals from other marginalized communities. She is the Vice-Chair of the California Commission on Access to Justice which works to identify innovative solutions and support efforts to increase access to courts and legal resources for low and modest means individuals and a member of the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission. Catherine currently serves as Chair of the California Health and Human Services Agency Alzheimer's Advisory Committee and is a member of the Department of Aging's Equity Advisory Committee on Aging and Disability. She previously served on Governor Newsom's Business and Jobs Recovery Task Force and the Master Plan for Aging Long-Term Services and Supports Subcommittee.

### Wynnelena Canlas Canio, MD, Vice Chair

*Mental Health Field Representative (December 2027)*

Wynnelena Canlas Canio, MD, AGSF, CMD is an experienced geriatrician and psychiatrist and Chief of Geriatric Medicine in Kaiser Permanente San Rafael. She has led several initiatives to improve care for older adults, including the implementation of a geriatric evaluation and management. She is a member of various committees and advisory groups in Kaiser Permanente San Rafael and beyond. Dr. Canio is a recognized subject matter expert in geriatric models of care and has been appointed to several state and national committees to tackle the growing dementia crisis. She completed her training at the University of Kansas Medical Center and UCLA and has received numerous awards and recognition for her work.

## Sally Bergman

*Elder Law Representative (January 2026\*)*

Sally Bergman is an elder law attorney with a passion to solve some of the many serious problems older adults and their families unfortunately face as they age. Sally's legal career spans more than four decades, all of which has been devoted to assisting those who have fewer opportunities to receive quality professional legal services than others. She earned an advanced law degree (LL.M.) in Estate Planning and Elder Law from Western New England University of Law and is accredited by the Veteran's Administration to represent Veterans. She is also an active member of National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), ElderCounsel, WealthCounsel, ElderLaw Answers, Academy of VA Pension Planners (AVAPP), the Trusts & Estates Section of the California State Bar, California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform and Coalition for Compassionate Care. Sally is a past President of the Northern California Chapter of NAELA. Sally proudly serves as Board Chair on the Board of Directors of Mission Hospice & Home Care, a non-profit in San Mateo.

## Claire Day

*Representative of a Consumer Organization Representing Persons with Alzheimer's (June 2026\*)*

Claire Day has been on staff at the Alzheimer's Association since 2001. She is the Chief Program Officer at the Northern California and Northern Nevada Chapter, overseeing all care and support operations and research initiatives. Ms. Day is a clinical social worker and received her degree from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. She has more than twenty years of experience as a family and professional educator in dementia care.

In 2018, Ms. Day was appointed the Chapter Lead for the US Study to Protect Brain Health Through Lifestyle Interventions to Reduce Risk (US POINTER) in California in partnership with UC Davis. US POINTER is a two-year clinical trial to evaluate whether lifestyle interventions that simultaneously target multiple risk factors protect cognitive function in older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline.

## Sarah Tomaszewski Farias, PhD, ABPP-CN

*Alzheimer's Disease Diagnostic and Treatment Centers Representative (September 2027)*

Dr. Sarah Tomaszewski Farias is Professor and Chief of the Cognitive Behavioral Division in the Department of Neurology at the University of California, Davis (UCD). She is a neuropsychologist with an NIH-funded research program investigating various aspects of cognitive aging including early signs of Alzheimer's disease, the effects of cognitive decline on everyday function, life course sociocultural and lifestyle factors that impact cognitive aging across diverse populations, and the development of behavioral interventions to promote cognitive and emotional health. She serves as the Clinical Core Leader in the UCD NIH-funded

Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) and directs the California Alzheimer's Disease Center of Excellence located within the UCD Healthy Aging Clinic.

### Myra Garcia

*Consumer Representative (December 2026\*)*

Myra Garcia was diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease in 2020 at age 62. The daughter of Cuban immigrants, Myra was born in New Jersey. A music major in college, Myra studied Spanish, Italian, French and German, while learning to sing in Hebrew, Latin, Portuguese and Czech. Following graduation, Myra worked as a classical soprano and performed in opera, oratorio, and music theater. She then moved to college fundraising, and became a vice present at two universities and a symphony orchestra.

Myra's diagnostic journey was long and challenging. Concerns about her cognition began about a decade ago when she began having trouble with her job responsibilities. She recalls having trouble completing assignments and keeping up with new technology. Eventually, her supervisor asked her to step down from her position for a reduced role.

Myra saw a neurologist who diagnosed her with attention deficit disorder (ADD). After years of pleading with her doctor that something more was wrong, her doctor referred Myra to a neuropsychiatrist. Following day-long cognitive testing and an exhaustive review of her medical records, Myra was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Following her diagnosis, Myra reached out to her local Alzheimer's Association and joined an early-stage support group. She also enrolled in a clinical trial that is evaluating the safety and efficacy of a new Alzheimer's drug, donanemab, for individuals with preclinical Alzheimer's disease.

### Ken Graffeo

*Consumer Representative (December 2026\*)*

Ken Graffeo was a highly accomplished, innovative marketing Executive at Universal Studios, developing game-changing concepts and solutions for leading entertainment enterprises including advertising and press outreach; event planning and management; problem solving and innovation solutions; team building, development and leadership; and process and procedure implementation. Prior to retiring, he was involved in cutting edge projects such as championing the launch of high definition (HD) entertainment and DVD product launches. He was also a small business owner. In 2019, Ken began experiencing symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and received his diagnosis in 2021. In the beginning, he found it very difficult to find resources and support that would explain what to expect moving forward on a timeline and how to communicate with others about what he was experiencing. He applied to serve on the committee to share his expertise and help to improve the education and support provided to those diagnosed with Alzheimer's, their care partners and other Californians.

## Barbra McLendon

*Service Provider Representative (September 2025\*)*

Barbra McLendon has a deep background in public policy. For over 15 years, she has focused on aging & long-term care policy and advocacy in her position as the Public Policy Director for Alzheimer's Los Angeles. During this time, she has developed legislation and policy recommendations to improve services and supports for people with dementia and their families. Her current projects include advocating for the development of dementia capable health care delivery systems and building dementia friendly communities in and around the Los Angeles area through "Purposeful Aging Los Angeles."

## William Mobley, MD, Ph.D.

*Academic Medical Research Representative (March 2028)*

Dr. William Mobley is a Distinguished Professor of Neurosciences and Associate Dean for Neurosciences Initiatives at the University of California, San Diego. He came to UCSD in June of 2009 from Stanford University where he served as the John E. Cahill Family Professor in the Department of Neurology and Neurological Sciences and was the founding director of the Neuroscience Institute. He earned his Ph.D. from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California in Neuro- & Behavioral Science in 1974 and an M.D. from the same institution in 1976. Dr. Mobley completed an internship in Pathology in 1977, and a Pediatric residency in 1979, both at Stanford University and then completed a residency and fellowship in Neurology and Pediatric Neurology at The Johns Hopkins University in 1982. While there, he was selected to serve as Chief Resident in Pediatric Neurology from 1981 to 1982. In 1983, he was certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and in 1987 by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology with Special Competence in Child Neurology.

Dr. Mobley is a Past President of the Association of University Professors of Neurology, the Professors of Child Neurology, and the International Society for Developmental Neuroscience. He is also a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (2001) and in 2004 was elected a Member of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine). In 2006, Dr. Mobley was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in 2011 received the International Sisley-Jérôme Lejeune Prize for research in Down Syndrome and in 2014 was named to the Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars. Dr. Mobley currently serves as President of the T21 Research Society. In 2019 he was appointed interim Director of the Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion. His research focuses on the biology of Alzheimer disease, especially as manifest in those with Down syndrome. It encompasses studies that extend from basic cellular mechanisms to the discovery of treatments and to the compassionate care of these individuals.

## Carlos Olivas III

*Family Member Representative (June 2027\*)*

Carlos Olivas, a devoted family man and primary caregiver, embarked on a transformative journey in 2015 when he left his career to care for his Dad living with Alzheimer's dementia. As a fellow with Caring Across Generations, a volunteer advocate for the Alzheimer's Association, and a local ambassador for Into the Dark Blue men's well-being group, Carlos passionately advocates for compassionate caregiving and mental health awareness. His role as a social media content creator amplifies his commitment, reaching a global audience with heartfelt narratives and valuable insights. A proud member of We are HFC's care influencer Care Squad and a caregiving.com Champion, Carlos is not just a caregiver but a dedicated speaker and guest on various media platforms, blogs, and podcasts. Through his experiences, he weaves a narrative that resonates with the universal themes of love, resilience, and the intricate dance of life's vibrant hues.

## Faisal Qazi, DO

*California Commission on Aging Representative*

Dr. Faisal Qazi has been a practicing Neurologist in southern California since 2006 and an Associate Professor of Neurology at Western University of Health Sciences and UC Riverside. He is co-founder of The Neurology Group, a specialty private practice group covering Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties through its outpatient clinics and at local hospitals. His work includes neuro-ethics as well as related public policy issues. He is currently the President of MiNDS (Medical Network Devoted to Service), a charitable organization that focuses on providing neurology-specific healthcare services to underserved families in the local service area. Dr. Qazi is from southern California and finished his residency training at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit in 2005. He subsequently finished a Neurophysiology Fellowship at UC San Diego in 2006.

## Celine Regalia

*Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center Representative (September 2027)*

Celine Regalia, MSW, MA CCC-SLP is currently the Executive Director of Providence Community Health Napa Valley (formerly Collabria Care). She was appointed this position in 2019. Before being promoted to this organization wide leadership role, she had 20 years' experience as the Program Director/Administrator of Collabria Care's Adult Day Health Care and Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, following 10 years with clinical experience in acute care, home health, and long-term care.

She is currently the ADCRC representative for the California Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Advisory Committee. She is Past President of the Board of Directors of the California Association of Adult Day Services (CAADS). Ms. Regalia co-chairs Napa County's Healthy Aging Population Initiative (HAPI), a collaborative of nonprofits and government agencies that serve older adults. Ms. Regalia is recognized at both local and state levels for her advocacy efforts on behalf of older adults.

### Todd Shetter

*Service Provider Representative (March 2025)*

Mr. Shetter has been in the senior housing and health care industry for more than 30 years. As the Chief Operating Officer at ActivCareLiving, he is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the day-to-day operation of ActivCare's residential memory care communities, managing personnel and overseeing resident care needs. Todd is a licensed Nursing Home and Residential Care Facility Administrator. Recently, he served on the Governor's Task Force on Alzheimer's (Disease) Prevention and Preparedness headed by Maria Shriver. The task force provided recommendations to the Governor to prepare for the anticipated rise in the number of families affected by the disease. Mr. Shetter also serves on the California Health and Human Services Alzheimer's Advisory Committee which represents consumers, providers, and advocates of those living with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. An active advocate for senior housing and assisted living in California, he serves on the California Assisted Living Association (CALA) Board of Directors and is a member of the Public Policy Committee. He is a past recipient of the Advocate of the Year Award from CALA. Mr. Shetter currently serves on the Community Advisory Board for the UCSD Institute of Healthy Aging and is a past member of the County of San Diego's Alzheimer's Project Care Roundtable. He graduated from Colorado State University with degrees in Public Relations and Sociology.

### Julie Souliere

*California Health and Human Services Agency Representative*

Julie Souliere has been an Assistant Secretary at the California Health and Human Services Agency since 2017. She oversees programmatic and fiscal affairs for the California Department of Public Health, the Emergency Medical Services Authority, and the Office of the California Surgeon General. She served in a career executive assignment and as special consultant at the California Department of Developmental Services from 2015 to 2017. Ms. Souliere was a principal consultant for the California Assembly from 2008 to 2015. She served as a finance budget analyst at the California Department of Finance from 2007 to 2008 and a legislative analyst at the California Department of Consumer Affairs from 2005 to 2007. Ms. Souliere earned a Master of Arts degree in government from California State University, Sacramento.

## Dolores Gallagher Thompson

*Social Research Representative (December 2027)*

Dr. Gallagher Thompson received her PhD in clinical psychology, with a minor in adult development and aging, in 1979 from the University of Southern CA and since then has conducted research, trained many clinicians, and provided clinical services to older adults & their families – first at the Palo Alto Veterans Administration and subsequently at the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University School of Medicine. She’s been board-certified in Geropsychology since 2014 and has specialized in using cognitive behavioral therapy to treat later life depression, and in developing a variety of programs to reduce distress in family caregivers of persons living with dementia. At present she is semi-retired from Stanford but remains active in clinical research and publishing.

## No Current Vacancies

*\* Member is eligible for an additional three-year term after their current term expires.*