



CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee August 6, 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: Carlos Olivas III, Jeanine Walter-Misirli and Kate Schulenberg

Members attending remotely: Sally Bergman, Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Claire Day, Sarah Tomaszewski Farias, Tony Gonzales, Jerry Jew, Barbra McLendon, William Mobley, Munir Moon, Stephanie Navarette, Celine Regalia, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson and Lindsey Yourman

Members absent: Senator Jesse Arreguin, Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, Julie Souliere

Call to Order: Welcome and Introductions, May 2026 Minutes

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, Committee Chair*
 - An update on ADRCAC member recruitment was provided.
 - Committee Members – A committee member asked if entities like the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) have been asked to advertise this opportunity to serve on the advisory committee. If not, it was suggested to send it to relevant entities to support recruitment efforts.

Sally Bergman moved to approve the May 2026 minutes. Claire Day 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 thanked everyone for helping and doing their part in growing the Alzheimer's, dementia, and caregiving network and advised that this will be her last committee meeting as she is leaving CDA.
 - Several members gave praise and thanks to Director DeMarois for her leadership.
 - Director DeMarois provided an update on the final State Budget and thanked the stakeholders and advocates around the state who elevated the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers during the budget process.
 - California received a Health at Home Challenge grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The lead partner for that grant is Partners and Care Foundation.
 - CDA has submitted two grant applications to ACL, one for Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative (ADPI) and one for Advancing State Implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.

Early Detection and Better Outcomes

Part I: Dementia Care Aware

- *Danielle Taylor, MBA, Director of Program Operations, Dementia Care Aware, University of California San Francisco (UCSF)*
- *Josette Rivera, MD, Professor of Medicine/Clinician Educator, UCSF Division of Geriatrics*
 - Danielle presented on Dementia Care Aware updates covering the programs' accomplishments over the last four years.

Committee Question and Answer (Q&A) and Discussion

- A committee member commended Dementia Care Aware and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for the work they do and information they publish. A comment was made that the only challenge now was to increase the number of physicians and health systems using early detection methods.

Part II: National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices (NTG) Screening for Dementia in Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

- *Lucille Esralew, PhD, Senior Psychologist Supervisor at California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)*
 - Lucille explained that we really do not have comparable tools to screen for suspected dementia in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) as we do for the general aging population.
 - Standard screening doesn't work as well for the IDD population. However, family members and staff who are knowledgeable about the individual are in the best position to notice important changes from the individual's baseline.
 - An explanation was provided on the Early Detection Screen for Dementia, how to fill it out, who the best people are to conduct the screening, and what to do with the information.

Committee Q&A and Discussion

- One member emphasized the usefulness and how helpful this screening is in determining the trajectory of treatment as someone with IDD ages.
- It was also clarified that the screening is not a clinical tool.

Part III: Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model

- *Cheryl Brunk, Health Systems Director, Alzheimer's Association*
 - Cheryl provided an overview of what an ideal patient journey might look like from awareness of a cognitive issue to dementia care navigation.

An overview of the GUIDE model components was provided along with how the Alzheimer's Association works with GUIDE participants.

Committee Q&A and Discussion

- One committee member discussed the concern of patients on Medicare Advantage not being eligible for the GUIDE program and the gap in coverage that it presents. He also stated that there are still other services available for patients who might now be eligible for the GUIDE program.
- Another member asked; with the GUIDE program being an eight-year pilot, when will we be seeing its impact? It was stated that some data is already available, some support groups

have been set up, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will be providing a report. It has yet to be determined when the report will happen.

Part IV: Physician's Experience in Practice – Screening, Detection, and Diagnosis

- *Wynnelena Canlas Canio, M.D., Committee Chair*
 - Dr. Canio shared her experience as a geriatrician in relation to screening, detection and diagnosing dementia.
 - She touched on some of the challenges in diagnosing dementia which include patients not wanting to be evaluated, concerns with losing their driver's license and independence, and fears that they might be treated differently.
 - She also discussed difficulty in reaching a proper diagnosis and that it may take multiple visits as well as a team of people to come to an agreed diagnosis. Especially important is the role of the caregiver and how often times they are the first ones to see a change in a patient.

Committee Q&A and Discussion

- Members discussed the importance of detecting a change in the patient early in the process and the important role family and/or caregiver(s) play in noticing changes.
- One member advised a possible recommendation to the Secretary to increase the awareness of primary care physicians (PCP) on the need for screening and who they can refer patients to.
- It was also pointed out that this topic is a public health crisis as well as a crisis in terms of a lack of access to cognitive neurology.
- A lack of mental health services for caregivers and the person living with dementia was also discussed.

2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report

- *Claire Day, Chief Mission and Program Strategy Officer, Alzheimer's Association*
 - Claire provided a high-level overview of the highlights of the 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report.
 - Highlights include: a focus on brain health in America, population differences, slow and burdensome progression, the caregiver workforce, the shortage of dementia care specialists, and the increasing cost of care.

California Department of Public Health Update

- *Tina Fung, Chief, Alzheimer's Disease Section, CDPH*
 - Tina provided updates on the CDPH's Alzheimer's Disease Programs' three goals; prevention, clinical and caregiving, and research.
 - Prevention includes making their media materials and information from the "Take on Alzheimer's" media website available on CDPH's department website and completing the California Healthy Brain Initiative evaluation report from 2020 to 2022 and posting it online. Updates were provided on the federal Block and BOLD grants.
 - Clinical and caregiving includes updating their toolkit and working on caregiver training modules with UC Irvine and UC San Francisco (Fresno).
 - Research includes CDPH currently funding seven research grantees with projects focused on priority populations heavily impacted by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and who might historically be

underrepresented in research. They are starting year three of the grant term. New data dashboards have been added to the CDPH website.

Legislative Updates

- *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, immunotherapy, genetic information and access to insurance, neurodegenerative disease registry, healthcare, caregiving, emergency preparedness, facility resident protections, and barriers to HR-1 implementation. Federal and state budgets were also discussed.
- *Andrew Mendoza, Director of State Affairs, Alzheimer's Association*
 - The presentation included current bills being sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association and their status.
 - Topics of sponsored bills included: healthcare coverage for Alzheimer's treatment, Dementia Care Aware budget request, and "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.

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:
 - Prioritizing long-term care affordability along with detection and treatment.
 - Re-evaluating the current adequacy of educational programs for PCPs, the number of PCPs being trained, and the availability of specialists to care for those patients who show a positive sign when screened.
 - Providing training to caregivers, administrators, and group homes.
 - Engaging Cal EMSA to fill the vacant first responder opening on the committee.
 - Focusing on caregiver burden.

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, October 29, 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)

- [Master Plan for Aging \(MPA\)](#)
- [CalHHS Alzheimer's Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee](#)
- [ADRCAC Member Biographies](#)

- [Online Application for ADRCAC Member](#)
- [California Department of Aging \(CDA\)](#)

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.