

Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council

January 28, 2026 1:00-3:00PM

Minutes

Attendees

Members Present

Pamela Williams
Mark Tesoro
Megan Peters
Halima Amjad
Cynthia Fields
Nancy Rodriguez-Weller
Ravi Gupta
Brian Berger
Claudia Thorne
Caitlin Houck
Quincy Samus
Ernestine Jones-Jolivet
Amanda Mummert

Corinne Pettigrew
Andres Salazar
Evie Vander Meer

MDH Staff Present

Lisa Marr
Adam Gaynor
Kate Natafgi
Adam Gaynor
Raia Contractor
Bradley Knight
Ali MacStudy
Tyra Hudgens

Members of the Public

Abigail Adams
Tammy Turner

Members Absent

Benjamin Brooks
Ashanti Martinez
Lynn Phan

Opening: Halima Amjad

A. Welcome

Council Chair, Dr. Halima Amjad called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.

B. Roll Call

Kate Natafgi of MDH called roll and a quorum was present (12 members).

C. Meeting Minutes Review/ Approval: October 22, 2025 Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes

Dr. Amjad reviewed the October 22, 2025 minutes, and called for a motion to approve; Ernestine Jones Jolivet moved to approve the minutes, Pamela Williams seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved with no objections.

D. Bylaws Subcommittee Update

Dr. Amjad reported that the Council is overdue for its biennial bylaws review. A bylaws subcommittee has been formed, consisting of Dr. Amjad, Megan Peters, and Ms. Jolivet. The subcommittee is scheduled to meet on February 19, 2026, and will present recommended updates at the April 2026 Council meeting. Members were invited to join the subcommittee if interested.

E. Council Chair Election

Dr. Amjad noted that, pursuant to the bylaws, Council chair elections occur every three years. Having served as Chair since January 2023, she announced that elections will be held at the April 2026 meeting. Council members interested in serving as Chair will be invited to submit short statements in advance of the meeting. The current Chair is eligible to run for a second term but has not yet determined whether she will do so.

F. Legislative Updates- Alzheimer’s Association Priority Legislation

Megan Peters provided an update on priority legislation introduced by the Alzheimer’s Association, highlighting House Bill 446, which seeks to strengthen supports for healthcare providers and enhance Maryland’s public health infrastructure related to dementia. The bill proposes development of a clinical resource toolkit through the Maryland Department of Health, in partnership with the Council and nonprofit organizations, and establishes a formal Dementia Services and Brain Health Program within the Department. The legislation is sponsored in the House by Delegate Martinez and is expected to be introduced in the Senate by Senator Hayes, with anticipated designation as a priority bill of the Legislative Black Caucus. Council leadership will circulate the bill language and, if appropriate, convene an ad hoc meeting to consider issuing a letter of support.

G. Maryland Data and Analytical Tool (MDAT) Presentation

Bradley Knight (MDH) presented the Maryland Data and Analytical Tool (MDAT), which replaces the former IBIS platform and provides public access to Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data. He demonstrated how users can analyze indicators such as subjective cognitive decline, stratify results by demographics, conduct age-adjusted analyses, download tables and graphs, and view county-level data and geographic maps. MDAT includes built-in data suppression, confidence intervals, and options to export data in CSV or Excel format, and is designed to be more user-friendly and efficient than its predecessor. Mr. Knight clarified that BRFSS data are self-reported and measure subjective cognitive decline rather than diagnosed dementia, and noted that a separate ADRD-specific dashboard—incorporating additional sources such as hospitalization data—is currently under development. Council members expressed appreciation for the enhanced accessibility of the data and its value for informing state plan updates and policy development.

H. 2026 Legislative Session Overview

Tyra Hudgens (MDH Office of Support Services) provided an overview of the 2026 Maryland General Assembly session, outlining the 90-day legislative timeline from January 14 through April 13, 2026, and highlighting key deadlines for bill introduction and crossover. She reviewed the life cycle of a bill, including committee review, floor votes, crossover to the opposite chamber, and the potential use of conference committees to resolve differences. Ms. Hudgens also explained the distinction between first reader and third reader bill versions and how to interpret amendments. In addition, she detailed the process for the Council to take positions on legislation, including submitting letters of support, opposition, concern, or information; following oral testimony procedures; complying with Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements

when voting on positions; and meeting submission deadlines at least two business days prior to hearings. She emphasized that written testimony is required whenever oral testimony is provided and that any testimony delivered on behalf of the Council must clearly state that it reflects the Council's official position.

I. STARS Program Update

Ali Macstudy (MDH) provided an update on the State Alzheimer's Research Support (STARS) initiative, which advances Goal 5 of the Maryland ADRD State Plan by strengthening the State's dementia-related data infrastructure. The initiative seeks to connect HIPAA-compliant data systems across aging, disability, social services, and clinical care settings; improve care coordination and referral pathways; measure health outcomes and cost impacts of dementia services; and support the development of sustainable reimbursement models. Key partners include the Area Agency on Aging (Lower Eastern Shore), The Living Center of Excellence, the Maryland Department of Aging, CRISP (Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients), and the Johns Hopkins Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program. Dr. Quincy Samus added that Maryland and Virginia are the first two "STAR states" funded by the National Institute on Aging to evaluate dementia-focused programs and expand statewide data capacity.

J. Johns Hopkins Memory Care Family Checklist Tool

Mark Tesoro from the Maryland Department of Aging announced the official launch of the Johns Hopkins Memory Care Family Checklist, developed with Council support and hosted on the Maryland Access Point website. The tool is designed to help caregivers navigate dementia-related services and resources across the state, with MAP staff training beginning this week. Mr. Tesoro highlighted the tool as a significant collaborative achievement, noting that caregiver feedback will be essential for ongoing refinement. Potential future enhancements include chatbot navigation, broader consideration of comorbidities, and integration with hospital transition teams. Council members were encouraged to promote the tool widely within their networks.

K. Subcommittee Workgroups Update

- a. Cynthia Fields presented the update on behalf of Subcommittee 1. She reported on progress toward the group's SMART objectives, including increasing the percentage of Marylanders experiencing memory loss who discuss concerns with a healthcare provider (target: 75%), advancing efforts to secure at least one hour of dementia-related training within Maryland health professions schools (with a joint meeting of school leaders anticipated in March), and implementing brain health educational messaging within Baltimore City public health campaigns. Dr. Fields noted challenges in identifying city-specific campaigns but shared that the group is exploring partnerships and leveraging available brain health toolkits. Council members and MDH staff highlighted existing and upcoming statewide brain health initiatives, including a planned digital campaign and professional education efforts such as Dementia ECHO, that may support this work.
- b. Megan Peters presented the update on behalf of Subcommittee 2. She reported that the group has been mapping ongoing statewide initiatives that align with its SMART objectives under Goals 2 and 3 of the State Plan, particularly those related to healthcare workforce development and system coordination. The subcommittee has tracked efforts including Project ECHO, Maryland Access Point enhancements, the Johns Hopkins

Memory Care Family Checklist tool, local health department implementation of cognitive screening, the rollout of GUIDE Model programs across Maryland health systems, and related AHEAD and BOLD initiatives. Ms. Peters noted that the group plans to reconvene more regularly and will continue refining how progress is documented in anticipation of the next State Plan update.

- c. Pamela Williams (MDH) presented the update on behalf of Subcommittee 3. She reported that the ADRD data tables have been finalized and published as the 2025 ADRD Prevalence Data Report and that work is ongoing to finalize the ADRD dashboard, with release anticipated within the next three to four months following standardization across MDH dashboards. Pamela also shared related federal funding updates, including continued Alzheimer’s disease funding increases and restored block grant funding, as well as upcoming opportunities to present on the AHEAD Model and Rural Health Transformation funding, both of which may support future ADRD data and system improvement efforts.

L. Public comment period

There were no comments from the public.

M. Adjournment

Before concluding the meeting, Dr. Halima Amjad reminded members that the next quarterly Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026. She also noted that an ad hoc meeting may be scheduled prior to April if legislative action requires the Council to consider taking a position. Additionally, she reminded members that Council Chair elections will take place at the April meeting and that further information would be shared via email. Noting that there were no more items on the agenda, Dr. Halima Amjad requested a motion to end the meeting. Nancy Rodríguez-Weller motioned to adjourn. Pamela Williams seconded the motion. The council chair adjourned the meeting at 2:17 pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 22, 2026