

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

October 22, 2025 1:00-3:00PM

## Minutes

### Attendees

#### **Members Present**

Benjamin Brooks  
Ashanti Martinez  
Pamela Williams  
Mark Tesoro  
Megan Peters  
Lynn Phan  
Halima Amjad  
Corinne Pettigrew  
Cynthia Fields  
Nancy Rodriguez-Weller  
Claudia Thorne  
Caitlin Houck  
Amanda Mummert  
Quincy Samus  
Ernestine Jones-Jolivet  
Evie Vander Meer

#### **Members Absent**

Ravi Gupta  
Brian Berger

#### **MDH Staff Present**

Lisa Marr  
Adam Gaynor  
Kate Natafqi  
Matthew Kenney  
Ali MacStudy

#### **Members of the Public**

Michael Ellenbogen  
Tammy Turner  
Victoria Martinez (MDOA)

### **Opening: Halima Amjad**

#### **A. Welcome**

Council Chair, Dr. Halima Amjad called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

#### **B. Roll Call**

Kate Natafqi of MDH called roll and a quorum was present (15 members).

#### **C. Meeting Minutes Review/ Approval: July 23, 2025 Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Amjad reviewed the July 23, 2025 minutes, and called for a motion to approve; Ernestine Jones Jolivet moved to approve the minutes, Del. Martinez seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved with no objections.

#### **D. New Business/ Announcements**

##### **a. Bylaws Review and Ad-Hoc Work Group Announcement:**

- i. Dr. Amjad led a discussion on the Council's bylaws, noting that they were originally drafted by an ad hoc work group in January 2023, require review every two years, and were approximately one year overdue for review. She proposed forming a new ad hoc work group to review the bylaws and bring recommendations to the January Council meeting, with Pamela Williams, indicating the review would likely require one to two meetings. Ernestine Jolivet volunteered to serve on the work group, and Megan Peters, and Halima Amjad, also expressed interest. Additional

Council members were invited to join the bylaws work group and to indicate their interest via chat or email.

- b. MDH Staffing Updates and Introductions
  - i. Dr. Amjad then turned the meeting over to Pamela Williams from MDH, for staffing updates. Ms. Williams announced and welcomed Ali MacStudy as the Acting Dementia Director, noting she had been in the role for approximately one month. Dr. Amjad and Council leadership expressed enthusiasm about the appointment and welcomed Ms. MacStudy to the Council. Ali MacStudy briefly addressed the Council and expressed her appreciation and interest in working with the group.
- c. Data Workgroup Update
  - i. Ms. Williams also provided an update on behalf of the Data Work Group. She reported that the ADRD dashboard had been finalized and was currently undergoing leadership review, with recent and upcoming demonstrations for leadership. She stated that the dashboard is anticipated to be ready by the end of November and is planned for presentation at the January Council meeting. Ms. Williams also noted that staff are coordinating with the communications office regarding a future press release.
  - ii. Quincy Samus, a member of the Data Work Group, commented positively on the dashboard based on an early preview. Dr. Amjad asked clarifying questions regarding the anticipated public launch timeline. Caitlin Houck suggested additional outreach, such as a webinar or educational materials, to explain the dashboard's development and use. Ms. Williams agreed and indicated she would explore options with the team.
- d. Letter Supporting Creation of a Council Seat for an Individual Living with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementias
  - i. Dr. Amjad introduced the agenda item regarding a proposed letter to the Governor supporting the creation of a Council seat for an individual living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. She provided background on the Council's prior discussions and a 2023 vote supporting the position, as well as the statutory authority allowing the Governor to appoint additional members upon Council recommendation.
  - ii. Kate Natafqi from MDH, provided additional context, explaining that the letter formalizes the Council's recommendation in writing and reviewed minor edits made to the letter since its circulation. She read the revised language aloud and noted that the letter would be signed by Dr. Amjad on behalf of the Council.
  - iii. Council discussion followed, including comments from Evie Vander Meer, who raised a broader question regarding equity and inclusion language and lived-experience representation. Dr. Amjad responded by clarifying that the intent was to ensure inclusion of the lived experience of individuals with dementia on the Council. Mark Tesoro, MDOA, and Senator Benjamin Brooks spoke in support of the inclusion and the positive role of lived experience in state advisory bodies.
  - iv. Dr. Amjad called for a motion to approve the letter. Senator Benjamin Brooks

made the motion, which was seconded by Mark Tesoro. Kate Natafagi conducted a roll-call vote. The letter was approved unanimously (16–0). Dr. Amjad thanked the Council for its participation and confirmed that the letter would be transmitted to the Governor.

**E. Presentation: Memory Care Checklist**

Dr. Halima Amjad introduced Mark Tesoro of the Maryland Department of Aging, who provided an update on the development of the Johns Hopkins Memory Care Family Checklist. Mr. Tesoro described the checklist as an evidence-based, self-paced, online tool designed to identify the needs of individuals living with ADRD and their caregivers and generate tailored recommendations, resources, and tips for both caregivers and individuals living with dementia. He noted that the tool has been fully digitized, incorporates years of validated Johns Hopkins research, links to hyper-local resources through the United Way 2-1-1 database, and prioritizes accessibility and privacy. The checklist covers seven domains (approximately 70 questions total), generates a customized, color-coded report to help triage needs, and allows users to save or print results for future reference or clinical visits. Development began in May and progressed rapidly, supported by council input and Administration for Community Living funding, with plans to launch the tool in January.

Mr. Tesoro also reviewed challenges and lessons learned, including balancing comprehensiveness with usability and managing the volume of resources provided, while allowing users to self-select supports. He outlined next steps, including finalizing edits, piloting the tool with the Commission on Aging, Maryland Access Point directors, council members, and potentially caregiver focus groups, and coordinating a statewide rollout and communications strategy to promote awareness and discovery. Council members expressed strong support and enthusiasm, asked questions about longitudinal use, caregiver feedback, and dissemination, and emphasized the importance of piloting, continuous improvement, and broad promotion through professional networks. Mr. Tesoro affirmed that the tool will be iterative and that council members would be invited to test it and provide feedback prior to launch.

**F. Presentation: BOLD Updates**

Ali MacStudy, Acting Dementia Director at MDH, introduced herself in her new role, noting her two years of experience with the Center as Community Prevention Team Manager and her oversight of the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant. She provided updates on several initiatives, including the development of a non-interactive ADRD resource guide organized for patients/community members, caregivers, and providers, with plans to disseminate it via QR code through local health departments and health inclusion coalitions. She also reported that the BOLD grant Notice of Award was received before the end of the fiscal year and that recruitment of local health departments is underway. Preliminary outcomes from the most recent reporting period included 144 ADRD educational events reaching more than 4,470 community members, outreach efforts reaching nearly 200,000 individuals, and a statewide brain health communications campaign generating over 7 million impressions.

Ms. MacStudy further shared that a grant guidance application is open, with four local health departments to be funded (applications due October 31) to strengthen bidirectional clinical–community linkages, increase dementia screenings, and improve access to prevention, support, and healthy aging programs. She also noted the addition of an approved treatments page

to the Center's website and invited suggestions for future updates. Following her presentation, Dr. Amjad suggested adding Ms. MacStudy to monthly subcommittee meeting invitations to support coordination and engagement, which Ms. MacStudy welcomed, and staff agreed to follow up with subcommittee chairs.

#### **G. Presentation: US Pointer Study**

Dr. Amjad introduced Megan Peters, Council member and Director of Government Affairs for the Maryland Alzheimer's Association, who provided updates on recent developments in dementia research, treatment, and policy. Ms. Peters highlighted findings from the two-year U.S. POINTER lifestyle intervention study, which demonstrated that both self-guided and structured multi-domain lifestyle interventions (focused on physical activity, nutrition, cognitive and social engagement, and health monitoring) improved cognition in adults ages 60–79 at risk for cognitive decline, with greater benefits seen in the structured group. She emphasized the importance of risk reduction, primary care engagement, and public health infrastructure, noting that approximately 2,000 participants have agreed to an extension study to assess longer-term outcomes. Ms. Peters also shared updates on emerging diagnostics and treatments, including recent FDA approvals of blood tests to aid in Alzheimer's screening and diagnosis, ongoing trials of GLP-1 medications for potential neuroprotective effects, and approval of an at-home auto-injector for maintenance dosing of an FDA-approved Alzheimer's treatment.

Ms. Peters further outlined the Alzheimer's Association's 2026 policy priorities in Maryland, including proposals to strengthen dementia-capable care through provider education, clinical toolkits, and enhanced public health infrastructure, as well as advocacy for increased state funding for dementia education and awareness initiatives. Council discussion following the presentation addressed the role of vision and hearing health, affordability of hearing aids, aging in place, prevention and cost containment, hospital nutrition, and the impact of food deserts on brain health, particularly in high-prevalence areas such as Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Ali MacStudy, MDH, noted ongoing state efforts related to food security, including partnerships to expand access to healthy foods through SNAP/EBT-supported programs and initiatives to promote healthy corner stores, emphasizing cross-agency collaboration to improve nutrition and brain health outcomes.

#### **H. Presentation: Brain Health Communication Campaign**

Dr. Halima Amjad introduced the final formal presentation of the meeting, delivered by Lisa Marr, Communications Director at MDH, who provided updates on the Maryland Department of Health's recent brain health and Alzheimer's disease-related communication initiatives. Ms. Marr described how ADRD outreach is integrated into broader chronic disease and cancer prevention efforts, emphasizing prevention-focused messaging around healthy nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and avoidance of tobacco products (including vaping and nicotine pouches). Outreach activities were conducted statewide at events such as the Maryland State Fair, reaching large audiences through direct conversations and educational displays. She also highlighted recent updates to MDH web pages, including the addition of FDA-approved treatments and elevating screening information to promote early detection.

Ms. Marr further reviewed recent digital advertising campaigns funded through BOLD grants, including provider- and consumer-focused ads across Meta, Google, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn, with messaging aligned across brain, heart, and diabetes health. Campaign analytics showed millions of impressions and strong click-through rates, particularly on Meta and Nextdoor, and MDH spent

slightly under its \$100,000 budget. She noted that campaign continuation depends on future funding but that reusable assets are now available, including a public toolkit. In discussion, Council members raised questions about addressing tobacco use, vaping, sugar consumption, food affordability, and engaging food retailers. MDH staff emphasized education without shaming, partnerships across bureaus, and the importance of advocacy, return on investment, and consumer demand in supporting healthier community environments.

**I. Subcommittee Workgroups Update**

- a. Cynthia Fields provided the update for Subcommittee 1. Subcommittee 1 is finalizing meetings with Maryland health profession schools, aiming for mid-December to early/mid-January. They are working to integrate results from the POINTER study into educational sessions for trainees and align with MDH messaging campaigns to promote prevention and healthy brain aging. A key focus is improving collaboration with the Alzheimer’s Association and MDH to avoid duplicating efforts. The subcommittee continues to face challenges in scheduling regular meetings for members with diverse responsibilities. Ali Macstudy (MDH) noted that one-pagers or educational materials could be developed in coordination with the communications department if subcommittee members provide content ideas and target populations.
- b. Megan Peters provided the update for subcommittee 2. Subcommittee 2 is reviewing progress on SMARTY objectives and broader state initiatives, including developing a journey map to assess resources for individuals recently diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers. The group continues to refine these efforts and advance implementation of parts of the plan ahead of the next planning cycle, with anticipation of new member participation, including Ali MacStudy.
- c. Pamela Williams provided the update for subcommittee 3. Subcommittee 3 remains focused on the ADRD data dashboard, with no additional updates reported at this meeting.

**J. Public comment period**

There were no comments from the public.

**K. Adjournment**

Noting that there were no more items on the agenda, Dr. Halima Amjad requested a motion to end the meeting. Sen. Brooks motioned to adjourn. Del. Martinez seconded the motion. The council chair adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 28, 2026**