

THE ARIZONA GWEP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

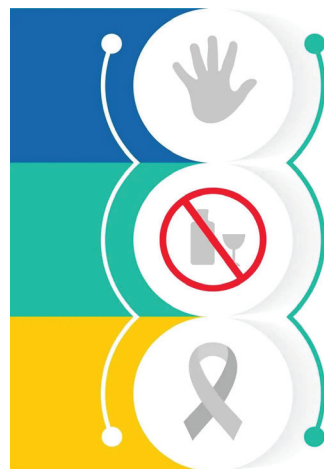


ABOUT

The mission of the Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (AZ-GWEP) is to provide the best possible care through an interprofessional approach to individual, system, community and population level education, training and models of care innovations.

The AZ-GWEP Newsletter is an important forum to share AZ-GWEP activities and highlight your valuable work. Please use this form by the 10th of each month to be featured in the next issue:

[SUBMIT INFO FOR
OUR NEXT ISSUE](#)



**ALCOHOL
AWARENESS
MONTH**
APRIL

April is Alcohol Awareness Month—a time to raise awareness and understanding of alcohol use and misuse. As people age, changes in their physical and mental health may cause alcohol to affect them differently than when they were younger and put them at greater risk for negative consequences. Understanding how alcohol affects the health of older adults can help them and their health care providers make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

The National Institute on Aging has provided some helpful [Facts About Alcohol and Aging](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)). Alcohol misuse in older adults can accelerate cognitive decline, affecting memory, thinking, and judgment. This connection is particularly important when considering the Mentation pillar of the 4Ms framework for Age-Friendly Health Systems. On [page 4](#), we dive deeper into Mentation—which focuses on promoting healthy cognitive function.

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

MEET CHERYL, OUR PARTNER FROM THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Meet Cheryl Brunk, Health Systems Director for the Alzheimer's Association serving Arizona, Nevada and Northern California. She serves to coach and consult with health systems and pull together best practices from throughout the Alzheimer's Association's nationwide network to help transform dementia capability within clinics, health systems and federally qualified health centers. Cheryl has experience engaging in full mission opportunities to deliver evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions for dementia professionals and Primary Care teams throughout the territory. She engages with constituents to consider becoming accredited in Age-Friendly Health Systems, identifying quality improvement projects leading to practice and systems change, in addition to identifying best avenues for cognitive screening for all 65+ leading to earlier diagnosis, treatment avenues, and ultimately more time for people living with this disease. Dementia Care Navigation is also a part of the conversation as many health systems are working as GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) model participants, trouble shooting and navigating with these partners to reach more people with this valuable service. Additionally, Cheryl mobilizes key volunteer leaders and staff members throughout the territory through community engagement, health systems outreach efforts significantly growing the Alzheimer's Association's volunteer leadership base and financial resources. Aside from her 10+ years with the Alzheimer's Association, she spent nearly 20 years with the American Cancer Society and another 7+ years with the American Diabetes Association. Hobbies/interests include hiking, biking, singing, and other adventures with her husband, adult son and daughter.



AZ-GWEP PARTNER MEETING

Thursday, April 24th

12:00 - 1:30 pm

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



ADVANCES IN AGING LECTURE SERIES

APRIL 14TH
12 - 1 pm (MST)

Frailty Assessment in Primary Care: The (What), Why and How
Mindy Fain, MD

[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

View archived presentations [here](#)

Download the event flyer

Advances in Aging Lecture Series

Frailty Assessment in Primary Care: The (What), Why and How

Mindy Fain, MD
Director, AZ-GWEP
Anna B. Alden West Professor of Medicine
Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Palliative Medicine
Co-Director, Arizona Center on Aging

April 14, 2025
12-1 pm (MST)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define frailty
- Discuss frailty assessment in primary care, including opportunities and barriers
- Explain common tools to assess frailty
- Describe potential next steps for people with frailty

VIEW ARCHIVED PRESENTATIONS

<https://streaming.biochm.arizona.edu/streams/20789/event/PASTSEARCHDATE:85&SEARCHCAT:27&SEARCHTOPIC:>

Accreditation Statement:
The University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Disclosure Statement:
All faculty, CME steering committee members, and the CME office reviewers have disclosed that they have no financial relationships with commercial entities that would constitute conflicts of interest concerning this CME activity.

Arizona Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine Program

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PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

www.medicine.arizona.edu

University of Arizona, Tucson - Geriatrics

The “General Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Palliative Medicine” division in the Department of Medicine doesn’t just study medicine—we transform it into exceptional care for people of all ages. With a strong focus on age-friendly healthcare, our team provides comprehensive geriatric services while equipping healthcare professionals with the skills to meet the complex needs of our aging society. Working hand-in-hand with the University of Arizona Center on Aging (ACOA)—a Board of Regents Center of Excellence and the administrative home to the AZ-GWEP—we pursue our shared mission of empowering older adults to live healthier, more functional lives through groundbreaking research, world-class education, and compassionate clinical care.



The Banner University Medical Center-Tucson Geriatrics Clinic serves as a primary care home for older adults, providing comprehensive outpatient care tailored to the unique needs of aging patients. We are proud to have received Level 2 Age-Friendly Recognition. Our team manages a wide range of acute and chronic conditions, while also focusing on dementia care, polypharmacy management, falls prevention, and geriatric assessments. As primary care providers, we emphasize preventative care, goal-directed treatment plans, and patient-centered decision-making, ensuring that older adults receive holistic, evidence-based care that aligns with their values and health goals.

The Banner University Medical Center-Tucson Inpatient Consult Service provides expertise in complex decision-making for hospitalized older patients, delirium prevention and treatment, medication management, and optimal transitions of care. Beyond providing consultations across medical-surgical wards, orthopedics, trauma, and intensive care units, we actively shape the next generation of healthcare leaders by engaging medical students, residents, and fellows in hands-on learning experiences.

Geriatric Medicine Education and Training Programs. Our Geriatrics Fellowship Program, in partnership with the Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System, provides comprehensive training in outpatient geriatrics, inpatient acute care consult services, post-acute and long-term care. Faculty members also teach internal medicine residents and medical students, incorporating geriatric principles and the 4Ms of Geriatrics (Mentation, Mobility, Medications, and What Matters Most) into both education and clinical practice.

The Quiburi Mission Nursing and Rehabilitation is an important extension of our outreach efforts, delivering post-acute and long-term care to older adults in rural and underserved communities. As an early pioneer of the Age-Friendly Health System initiative and one of the first nursing homes selected for a national pilot study, Quiburi exemplifies our dedication to overcoming the unique healthcare challenges facing rural older adults, including limited access to essential community resources.

We are committed to **Research & Quality Improvement** initiatives that are advancing geriatric care. Our focus includes cognitive health, frailty prevention, and optimizing high value models for older adults with complex medical needs. We continuously work to enhance the patient experience and healthcare delivery by implementing evidence-based practices in outpatient, inpatient, and long-term care settings.

Through clinical innovation, educational leadership, and community partnerships, the Division and the Arizona Center on Aging remain steadfast in our mission to transform care for older adults throughout Arizona.

For more updates on our programs and initiatives, visit aging.arizona.edu.

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AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH SYSTEMS: EXPLORE THE 4Ms

A Closer Look at **Mentation**

A health system that is Age-Friendly provides a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the “4Ms,” to all older adults in the system. The four pillars in this framework include **What Matters**, understanding each person’s unique goals and preferences; **Mobility**, keeping older adults active and independent; **Medication**, ensuring prescriptions help, not harm; and **Mentation**, protecting brain health and cognitive function. When these elements work together, they create a system of care that addresses the complex needs of our aging population so that they can do “what matters most.”



“**Mentation**” focuses on the prevention, identification, and treatment of three critical brain health challenges- **dementia**, **depression**, and **delirium** across all care settings, focusing on supporting cognitive function and promoting independence. In order to optimize care, this approach includes prevention, identification, and “acting on” the assessment to provide appropriate interventions.

Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer’s is the most common cause of dementia.¹

Depression is a serious mood disorder affecting feelings, actions, and thoughts. While common among older adults, it is not a normal part of aging, as most older adults report satisfaction with their lives.²

Delirium is a sudden, serious change in a person’s mental state of confusion and disorientation that happens over a few hours or days.

This urgent medical condition occurs more frequently in older adults, especially those with dementia, and can have many different causes and treatments. Often overlooked, it can often be prevented, recognized and treated.³

The Mentation element of an Age-Friendly Health System doesn’t just identify these conditions – it works to prevent them and provides targeted interventions to optimize cognitive health and independence.

¹ <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>

² <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/mental-and-emotional-health/depression-and-older-adults>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29020579/>

Linked in

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