

# THE ARIZONA GWEP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 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](#)



International  
Day of  
Persons with  
Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities** is observed annually on **December 3rd** and aims to promote the rights, dignity, and well-being of persons with disabilities. Many people over 65 live with at least one chronic condition that may limit daily activities, placing them within the disability community even if they don't primarily identify as disabled. This day serves as a reminder that disability is a natural part of the human experience across the lifespan, and that creating inclusive, accessible communities benefits both older adults and people with disabilities of all ages.

Mobility disabilities, which affect a person's ability to move independently, are among the most common types of disabilities, particularly in older adults. On [Page 7](#), learn more about how Mobility is one of the foundational 4Ms that make up an Age-Friendly Health System.

Learn more from the National Institute on Aging about how [Maintaining Mobility and Preventing Disability are Key to Living Independently](#). On [Page 8](#) you can find more information on disability and dementia. This information sheet, along with others, are available for download on the Arizona Center on Aging's [Care Partner Information Sheets](#) site.

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## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### MEET CHERI FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF NURSING

Dr. Cheryl Lacasse is a Clinical Professor in Nursing and certified as an Advanced Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist with specialty training in chronic condition management and interdisciplinary gerontology.



As Director of Teaching, Learning and Evaluation at the College of Nursing, she uses her expertise in the education of healthcare professionals. In addition, she is recognized by the National Hartford Center for Gerontological Nursing Excellence as a Distinguished Educator in Gerontological Nursing.

She is also board-certified as an Integrative Nurse Coach and brings a holistic approach to teaching nursing students, mentoring colleagues, supporting healthy aging and older adults living with complex chronic conditions. She served on interprofessional teams in oncology and older adult care and interprofessional education in comprehensive cancer centers and acute and ambulatory care settings. She enjoys interprofessional collaboration and the unique perspectives of colleagues who share the passion for supporting quality of life in older adult populations.

Dr. Lacasse's focuses on supporting older cancer survivors achieving their best quality of life and has presented on many topics in caring for individuals with complex health care challenges. Her interest in integrative health led her to explore the dimensions of wellbeing in students, faculty, and older adults and how to support wellbeing across the life cycle.

Her interests include peaceful walks in nature, exploring the wonders of the night sky, reading a good story, enjoying meditation and yoga, and listening to Christmas music year-round.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



ADVANCES IN AGING  
LECTURE SERIES

JANUARY 13th  
12 - 1 pm (MST)

We are taking the month  
of December off for the  
holidays, but will return  
in the new year.

View archived  
presentations [here](#)

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## GWEP COORDINATING CENTER MEETING AGENDA

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS | NOVEMBER 11, 2025



AZ-GWEP Project Director, Mindy Fain, attended the GWEP-CC Preconference on November 11, 2025. The day-long event provided valuable educational opportunities and networking with colleagues across the geriatrics workforce education field.

Mindy helped present a session titled **“Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition: Update on GWEP Apprenticeship Program and Q&A,”** sharing our latest progress and engaging with attendees about the apprenticeship program’s impact on nursing home quality improvement.

The preconference served as an excellent platform to exchange insights and strengthen connections within the GWEP community ahead of the main GSA conference.

*A full Preconference agenda can be found on the following two pages.*

**LinkedIn**

Connect with our  
AZ-GWEP Community  
Group Page on LinkedIn



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**GWEP-CC Preconference at #GSA25**

**Tuesday, November 11, 2025**

**Sheraton Boston Hotel  
Room: Back Bay B (unless otherwise noted)**

## **GWEP Pre-Conference Agenda 9:00 am-6:00 pm ET**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item/Speakers</b>
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Marketplace Set-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room: Back Bay C</li> <li>Those who are assigned to Round #1, please set up your pre-assigned table.</li> <li>All others, please place your materials under your pre-assigned table for easier transition.</li> </ul>
<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nancy E. Lundebjerg, MPA, CEO, American Geriatrics Society</li> <li>Jan Busby-Whitehead, MD, FACP, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Director, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill GWEP</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Explanation of GWEP Marketplace</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan Busby-Whitehead, MD, FACP, AGSF, Director, Center for Aging and Health, University of North Carolina School of Medicine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room: Back Bay C</li> <li>Time Allotment: Three, 40-minute rounds, 5 minutes for switching</li> <li>Presenting: 42 Cohort 3 GWEPs, 1 Cohort 2 GWEP, AGS/EWA/GSA/NAGE, Moving Forward</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>10:05 am</b>	<b>GWEP Marketplace: Round #1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room: Back Bay C</li> </ul>
<b>10:45 am</b>	<b>Marketplace Switch</b>
<b>10:50 am</b>	<b>GWEP Marketplace: Round #2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room: Back Bay C</li> </ul>
<b>11:30 am</b>	<b>Marketplace Switch</b>
<b>11:35 am</b>	<b>GWEP Marketplace: Round #3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Room: Back Bay C</li> </ul>
<b>12:15 pm</b>	<b>Lunch &amp; Celebration of Nina Tumosa</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remarks by: Ellen Flaherty, PhD, APRN, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Vice President, Dartmouth Health Geriatric Center of Excellence, Jan Busby-Whitehead, MD, FACP, AGSF, Director, Center for Aging and Health, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Thomas V. Caprio, MD, MPH, AGSF, Director, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, University of Rochester, Catherine P. Carrico, PhD, Clinical Associate Professor, Associate Director, University of Wyoming, and Sam Cotton, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Louisville (Past and Current Presidents of the National Association of Geriatrics Education)</li> </ul>



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Time	Agenda Item/Speakers
12:45 pm	<b>Artificial Intelligence: (The Promise and Peril)<sup>x</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steven E. Waldren, MD, MS, VP and Chief Medical Informatics Officer, American Academy of Family Physicians</li> </ul>
1:15 pm	<b>Q&amp;A Session and Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Moderated by:</i> Tom Caprio, MD, MPH, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Director, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, University of Rochester</li> </ul>
1:30 pm	<b>Explanation of Round Table Discussions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Caprio, MD, MPH, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Director, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, University of Rochester</li> </ul>
1:35 pm	<b>Round Table Discussions</b> <b>Suggested topics:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>How are you currently using (or planning to use) AI within your own work or with your partners?</b></li> <li><b>What lessons have you learned to sustain partnerships?</b></li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A pre-assigned facilitator will guide the round table discussion.</li> <li>Please assign a timekeeper, as well as a notetaker.</li> <li>Please write on your index card and come up to the podium to share: What one thing generated the most excitement during your table's discussion?</li> </ul>
2:25 pm	<b>Report Outs: Round Table Discussion Summaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please write on your index card and come up to the podium to share: What one thing generated the most excitement during your table's discussion?</li> <li><i>Moderated by:</i> Tom Caprio, MD, MPH, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Director, Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center, University of Rochester</li> </ul>
3:00 pm	<b>Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition: Update on GWEP Apprenticeship Program and Q&amp;A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Arizona GWEP, University of Oklahoma GWEP, and Padma Arvind, PhD, MBA, Senior Director, NetAmerica</li> <li><i>Moderated by:</i> Alice Bonner, PhD, RN, Chair, Moving Forward Coalition and IHI Senior Advisor for Aging, Molly Carpenter, MS, Director of Workforce Strategy and Development, LeadingAge LTSS Center @ UMass Boston, and Robyn Stone, DrPH, SVP for Research, LeadingAge/Co-Director, Leading Age LTSS Center @ UMass Boston</li> </ul>
3:30 pm	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ellen Flaherty, PhD, APRN, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Vice President, Dartmouth Health Geriatric Center of Excellence</li> <li>Rani E. Snyder, MPA, Acting President, The John A. Hartford Foundation</li> </ul>
4:30-6:00 pm	<b>AGS, JAHF, NAGE, GSA Reception for Nina Tumosa</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Welcome Remarks by:</i> Ellen Flaherty, PhD, APRN, AGSF, Co-PI, GWEP-CC, Vice President, Dartmouth Health Geriatric Center of Excellence Room: Back Bay C</li> </ul>

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## Join Guiding Star Study

### Understand How Care Partners Prevent Falls for People with Memory Issues



- Are you providing support to someone with memory issues?
- We invite you to share your experience and wisdom to help us better understand what can help care partners prevent falls for someone with memory issues.

You may be eligible if you

- Currently provide care or support for a **family member or friend** who lives with memory issues
- You have provided such support for **at least 3 months**

We especially welcome care partners of different genders and cultural backgrounds.

You will be asked to complete **a self-paced survey (30-40 minutes), online or in-person** with a study team member.

Compensation will be provided upon completion



#### Four easy ways to get started:

1. **Scan the QR code** on this flyer
2. **Type “[redcap.link/cpstar](https://redcap.link/cpstar)”** in your internet browser
3. **Email:** [care.equity.aging@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:care.equity.aging@austin.utexas.edu)
4. **Call:** 512-471-1713

WE  
WANT  
YOU



The Guiding Star Study is supported  
by the National Institute on Aging.

2025

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## AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH SYSTEMS: EXPLORE THE 4Ms

### A Closer Look at **Mobility**

#### Why Mobility Matters: The Key to Aging on Your Own Terms

In Age-Friendly Health Systems, Mobility stands alongside What Matters, Medication, and Mentation as a cornerstone of excellent care for older adults. Here's why it earned its place at the table:

**It's about freedom, not just function.** Sure, walking keeps your heart healthy and your bones strong. But more importantly, it lets you do what matters to you—whether that's browsing the farmers market, dancing at a wedding, or simply getting up to make your own cup of coffee.



**It's the domino that keeps others from falling.** Lose your mobility, and other problems follow. You can't get to doctor appointments (medication issues). You become isolated (mentation suffers). You lose the ability to do the things that give your life meaning (what matters most).

**It connects to everything else.** Changes in gait, balance, and physical strength increase the number and severity of falls, making it harder for older adults to visit friends and family and continue their activities independently. Mobility loss affects not just physical health but emotional and social well-being too.

**It's where prevention meets empowerment.** Unlike some aspects of aging we can't control, mobility can often be preserved or even improved with the right interventions—giving older adults real agency over their futures.

#### The Bottom Line

Maintaining mobility isn't just about muscles and bones—it's about maintaining your life as you know it. It's about choice, connection, and dignity. And thankfully, research is showing us that with the right support, exercise programs, and environmental modifications, older adults can keep moving, keep living independently, and keep doing what matters most to them.

You may also be interested in

- National Council on Aging: [Falls Free CheckUp](#)
- HealthinAging Tip Sheet: [Home Safety Tips For Older Adults](#)
- National Institute on Aging resources: [Exercise and Physical Activity](#)

**Reference:** National Institute of Aging [Maintaining Mobility and Preventing Disability Are Key to Living Independently As We Age](#)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Center on Aging

alzheimer's association®

Desert Southwest Chapter

## Care Partner Information

*Tips for Providing Older Adult Care*

### Disabilities and Dementia

#### How Can You Know if Someone With Special Needs Has Dementia?

People with special needs live longer now than in the past. This means they can get dementia just like anyone else. People who have Down syndrome have a very high chance of getting one common type of dementia - Alzheimer's disease. Almost everyone with Down syndrome will get it. And, they often get it at a young age - often in their 40s or 50s. People with seizures that begin in early adulthood also have a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease.

The symptoms of dementia can be different in someone with special needs. It can cause them to forget skills they have learned. And like everyone else who gets dementia, they may be unable to take care of themselves.

If you are taking care of someone with special needs, here are some signs of dementia that you might see.

Signs of Dementia in a Person with Special Needs
Less interest in being sociable, talking, or telling you what they think.
Less interest in usual activities.
Less ability to pay attention.
Being sad, fearful, or anxious.
Being irritable, aggressive, or not cooperating.
Sleep problems.
Being noisy.
Trouble walking or losing coordination.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at [www.aging.arizona.edu](http://www.aging.arizona.edu)



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Continued from front page

## *Care Partner Information*

Someone with special needs may not understand what 'dementia' is. They may not understand what is happening to them. They may get upset or frustrated. You can help them in several ways. Tell them to see a doctor to find out what kind of dementia they have. Be supportive and patient. Use words they know. Help them to continue doing things they like to do. Keep a normal schedule.

Dementia can get worse quickly in people with special needs, so be prepared to add support when needed to keep them safe.

### **Tips to Support Someone with Special Needs and Dementia**

Talking might become hard for them. Pay attention to their body language to help figure out what they want or need.

Listen carefully to everything they try to tell you.

Be positive and reassuring.

Let them be in control when possible.

Help them feel secure and comfortable by sticking to regular routines and schedules.

Try to keep things calm and familiar.

Humming or music can be soothing.

Look at photos together.

Help them to eat well.

Ask the doctor for help if...

- They get aggressive.
- You feel overwhelmed.

### **Resources**

- Alzheimer's Association; <http://alz.org> or call their helpline 24 hours, 7 days a week (800) 272-3900
- National Down Syndrome Society; <http://ndss.org> or call them (800) 221-4602

**Written By: Cynthia Vargo, Alzheimer's Association**

Alzheimer's disease and Related Dementia ~ Care Partner Information

Edited by an interprofessional team from the University of Arizona Center on Aging,  
Alzheimer's Association - Desert Southwest Chapter and Community Caregivers

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