

THE ARIZONA GWEP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026



ABOUT

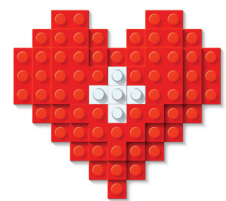
The mission of the Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (AZ-GWEP) is to provide the best possible care through an interprofessional approach to individual, system, community and population level education, training and models of care innovations.

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](#)



Building Innovative Care
Where It Matters Most.



This month we observe [National Health Center Week](#), which honors the community health centers that deliver accessible, high-quality primary care to millions of patients including many older adults. This year's theme, "Building Innovative Care Where It Matters Most," highlights how these centers continue to find creative ways to meet patients where they are and improve access to care.

For the AZ-GWEP, this observance is a natural moment to recognize the vital role community health centers play in caring for our state's aging population. Many of our trainees and partners work in or alongside these centers every day, bringing geriatrics-informed care to communities that need it most. Good care often means connecting older adults to resources beyond the clinic. On [Page 6](#), download our **Community Resources for Older Adults** elder care interprofessional provider sheet as a quick reference on Area Agencies on Aging and other community supports.

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

MEET RAYMOND FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH

Hello, my name is Raymond G. Valenzuela Jr., MPH, and I am a public health professional with many years' experience promoting healthier communities across Arizona. I am a proud member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and I currently serve as a Research Program Administration Officer III with the University of Arizona Center for Rural Health. I am passionate about collaborating with Native and rural communities to improve health outcomes through education, data, and trusted partnerships.



Throughout my career, I have been committed to building meaningful partnerships and improving access to health information and resources. My experience includes managing statewide efforts to connect individuals and families with healthcare coverage, supporting aging and brain health research, and serving as an Epidemiologist with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. These roles have strengthened my passion for culturally responsive public health practices and community-driven solutions.

I earned my Master of Public Health from A.T. Still University and a Bachelor of Arts in Mexican-American Studies from the University of Arizona. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, barbecuing, traveling, and making new memories with my wife Lisa and my sons Raymond and Jorge.

LinkedIn

Connect with our
AZ-GWEP community
on LinkedIn

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



ADVANCES IN AGING LECTURE SERIES

August 10th
12 - 1 pm (MST)

The Geriatric Emergency Department
Samantha Jane Russell, MD

[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

View archived presentations [here](#)

Download the event flyer below

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Banner
Alzheimer's
Institute

Dementia Friends Champion Training

Does the Dementia Friends philosophy speak to you? Are you interested in being trained to facilitate sessions in your networks or the broader community? **NEXT TRAINING: AUGUST 26TH 10 AM - 11:30 AM MST**

[Register](#)

Join the GWEP-CC Online Community



GWEPOnline is the central hub for the GWEP-CC Age-Friendly Health Systems Continuous Action Community and for all GWEP directors, team members, and partners.

Members will have access to resources such as the American Geriatrics Society Age-Friendly Resource Library, GWEP CC Newsletter, GWEP-CC Coaching Calls (slides and recordings), Community Catalyst's 4Ms Consumer Tools, GWEP-CC Age-Friendly Health Systems Case Studies, and much more. You can view the last GWEP-CC Coaching Call, "4Ms Deep Dive: Medication": [recorded team webinar](#). Coaching Call slides are available under Tools and Resources on the GWEP Online Community site (see below on how to register).

NEXT CALL: AUGUST 13TH AT 12:00 PM MST

If you would like to join the [GWEP Online Community](#) (login required) **please contact Lisa O'Neill at loneill@arizona.edu** who will submit your name for account creation.



[Register](#)

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20th Annual Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia in Native Americans

KNOWLEDGE, CONNECTIONS, & SUPPORT

Thursday, October 22, 2026
8:10 am - 4:00 pm
Great Wolf Lodge



Conference Location

Great Wolf Lodge
Conference Center Ballrooms
7333 N Pima Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85258



Hotel Information

Great Wolf Lodge
7333 N Pima Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Visit: <https://www.greatwolf.com/arizona>

Reservations, call 480-948-9653 and reference
"20th Annual Native American Conference" or
click the Reservation Group Weblink below for
online reservations: [20th Annual Native American
Conference - Booking Link](#)

**Room Rate: \$159.00 + tax. Room rates are based
on 1 - 4 guest per room.**

To receive this Group Rate, hotel room
reservations must be made by end of day on
Sunday, September 20, 2026.



Event Registration

\$30.00 per person for the Pre-Conference on
Wednesday, 10/21/26

\$30.00 per person for Main Conference on
Thursday, 10/22/26

BAIFCS@bannerhealth.com for more
information.

Visit: www.bannerhealth.com/alznativeamerican or
Call 602.230.2273 (CARE)

Payment options: credit card, invoice or check

Mail Checks to:

Banner Health Corporate - Mesa
Attn: Cippy Seidler
3rd Floor, Room 3315
525 W. Brown Rd., Mesa, AZ 85201

Limited Family Caregiver & Student Scholarships
available. Please contact Nicole Lomay at Nicole.Lomay@BannerHealth.com



Large Group Registrations

For Group attendees of 5 or more, please contact
the 230-CARE Team at 602.230.2273 (CARE).

Cancellations must be made in writing to:

BAIFCS@BannerHealth.com

A full refund minus a \$15.00 processing fee is available
through Friday, October 9, 2026. No partial refunds
will be made.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Medicine Wheel of Brain Wellness: Tradition Meets Science

You won't want to miss our milestone 20th anniversary conference where cutting-edge Alzheimer's research meets Indigenous wisdom. This unique conference features expert-led sessions exploring the interconnected dimensions of brain health: mind, body, spirit, and emotion—paired with hands-on traditional activities that bring scientific principles to life, creating a holistic approach to cognitive wellness and dementia risk reduction.

AUDIENCE

This conference is intended for elders, family caregivers, professional caregivers, health care providers, educator's and tribal leaders.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

**The May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust,
the John and Sophie Ottens Foundation,
Eisai Inc.,
and
University of Arizona GWEP
grant partnership**

AGENDA

7:30 to 8:10 am	Registration / Continental Breakfast
8:10 to 8:30 am	Welcome / Blessing / Introduction <i>Emcee: Laurai Atcity, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona</i>
8:30 to 9:30 am	Addressing Alzheimer's Disease: Research and Clinical Updates <i>Eric Reiman, MD</i>
9:30 to 9:45 am	Keeping Balanced for a Healthy Brain <i>Jeremy Pruzin, MD</i>
9:45 to 10:45 am	Healthy Body: Strengthening Through Movement & Care / Activity <i>Jeremy Pruzin, MD & Gabrielle Begay, BS & Sharmayne Hardy, ATC, LAT: Native Health Activity</i>
10:45 to 11:00 am	Break / Resource Fair
11:00 to 12:00 pm	Healthy Mind: Exercising & Renewing Your Brain / Activity <i>Marwan Noel Sabbagh, MD, FAAN & Celinda Joe, BSW: SRPMIC Activity</i>
12:00 to 1:00 pm	Lunch / Resource Fair
1:00 to 1:15 pm	Shine Your Light Choir <i>Heather Mulder, BS</i>
1:15 to 2:15 pm	Healthy Emotion: Connecting & Healing / Activity <i>Eric Scott Cerino, PhD & Kaya Perry, BA: Native Health Activity</i>
2:15 to 2:30 pm	Break / Resource Fair
2:30 to 3:30 pm	Healthy Spirit: Finding Peace & Balance / Activity <i>Helle Brand, PA & Erin Manuel: SRPMIC Activity</i>
3:30 to 4:00 pm	Closing / Blessing / Evaluation

FEATURED PRESENTERS

Gabrielle Begay, BS Dine'
Native Health, Indigenous Wellness Program Coordinator

Eric Scott Cerino, PhD.
Assistant Professor, Northern Arizona University

Celinda Joe, BSW Dine'
SRPMIC, Senior Services Coordinator

Sharmayne Hardy, ATC, LAT Dine'
Native Health, Community Health Worker

Erin Manuel, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
SRPMIC, Senior Manager

Kaya Perry, BA
Native Health, Indigenous Garden Educator

Marwan Noel Sabbagh, MD, FAAN
Behavioral Neurologist
Barrow Neurological Institute

BANNER ALZHEIMER'S INSTITUTE TEAM

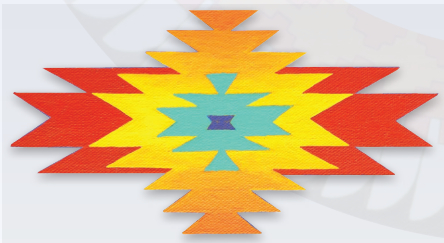
Helle Brand, PA
Clinician

Nicole Lomay, BIS Dine'
Senior Outreach Program Manager Native American Outreach Program

Heather Mulder, BS
Associate Director Outreach Research

Jeremy Pruzin, MD
Neurologist & Principal Investigator

Eric Reiman, MD
CEO Emeritus & Lead Scientist



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON
Center on Aging

www.aging.arizona.edu

January 2023

ELDER CARE

A Resource for Interprofessional Providers

Community Resources for Older Adults

Lisa M. O'Neill, DBH, University of Arizona Center on Aging

Jennifer Caragan, Arizona Area Agency on Aging, Region 2 - Pima Council on Aging

During clinical visits, healthcare providers will often determine that a patient has a need best filled by a community resource. This Elder Care will focus on community resources found in most areas.

Area Agencies on Aging

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were created in 1973 through the Older American's Act (OAA), to help older Americans (60+), younger adults with disabilities, and their caregivers to live quality lives in their homes and communities with independence and dignity. AAAs are a nationwide network of nonprofit agencies designed to assist clients with expert information and resources.

AAAs assist with coordination of care using a variety of home and community-based services to maximize health outcomes and empower clients to manage their chronic conditions. Most agencies serve a specific geographical area, so most states have several AAAs. You will have to investigate to determine what services your regional AAA provides but common programs include providing long-term care ombudsmen, insurance counseling, Medicaid/Medicare planning, end-of-life planning, caregiver support, information on meals and nutrition, fall prevention classes, and information about rights and benefits. They are also knowledgeable about other local resources, so even if they don't offer a particular service, they likely will be able to provide a referral to an appropriate agency.

<https://www.usaging.org/>

Eldercare Locator

Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging that connects older adults and their caregivers to trustworthy local support resources. Online searches are available at <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx> or you can call 1-800-677-1116 to speak to an information specialist.

Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's disease care, support, and research. Their mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, provide and enhance care and support for those affected by dementia, and reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health, making it a good resource even for those who do not have dementia. The association runs support groups, both in person and via an online community forum called "ALZConnected" <https://www.alzconnected.org/>. They also provide comprehensive online resources and information about dementia caregiving, and a free online navigation tool that helps people determine their needs and develop a plan of action <https://www.alzheimersnavigator.org/>. You can find your local chapter at https://www.alz.org/local_resources/find_your_local_chapter?state

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for those affected by mental illness. They offer education and support groups, free information and referral services, and host public awareness events. You can find your local NAMI at <https://www.nami.org/Home> or call the NAMI helpline at 1-800-950-6264.

Senior Centers

Senior centers connect older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent. More than 60% of senior centers are designated focal points for delivery of OAA services - allowing older adults to access multiple services in one place. They offer a variety of services including health, fitness and wellness programs, public benefit counseling, employment assistance, volunteer opportunities, education and art

TIPS ABOUT USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Referrals to community resources can help maintain the health and wellbeing of your patients.
- Community-based services are designed to help community-dwelling older adults remain safely in their homes and can often delay or prevent institutionalization.
- Often older adults (and often many clinicians) do not know about the range of services available or where to find them. Key resources are outlined in this Elder Care.

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ELDER CARE

Continued from front page

programs. Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can learn to manage and delay the onset of chronic disease and experience measurable improvements in their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental, and economic well-being. You can find your local senior center at <https://www.seniorcenterdirectory.com/>

Adult Day Services Association

For older adults who need assistance during the day, adult day care services can be helpful. Adult day care services include personal and nursing care, group meals, therapeutic exercises, and social and recreational activities. Most adult day care centers, like senior centers, are supported through public and non-profit organizations. Fees may range from a few dollars to several hundred dollars a day, depending on the services needed. The National Adult Day Services Association can help find a provider in your area <https://www.nadsa.org/>

Meals on Wheels America

Over five million seniors are at risk for food insecurity. Meals on Wheels is a federally supported program designed to meet the nutritional and social needs of seniors. The program relies on volunteers who enable 221 million meals to be delivered to 2.4 million seniors each year.

<https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals>

Family Caregiver Alliance

The Family Caregiver Alliance provides quality information, support, and resources to family caregivers <https://www.caregiver.org/>. Their Family Care Navigator can assist in finding local and national resources <https://www.caregiver.org/connecting-caregivers/services-by-state/>

National Resource Center on Native American Aging

Funded through the Administration on Aging, the National Resource Center on Native American Aging (NRCNAA) is committed to identifying Native elder health and social issues. Through education, training, and technical assistance, they assist in developing community-based solutions to improve the quality of life and delivery of related support services to the Native aging population. <https://www.nrcnaa.org/>

Suicide Prevention Hotlines

Each year almost 46,000 Americans die by suicide. That is 1 death every 11 minutes. In 2020, 1.2 million adults

attempted suicide. Older adults, particularly older men, are a high-risk group. If someone is in crisis, call 911 or one of the hotlines below.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call, text or chat 988 to connect to trained counselors. Available 24/7.

Crisis Text Line Text "HOME" to 741741 to reach a volunteer crisis counselor. Available 24/7.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
Treatment Referral Helpline
1-800-662-HELP (4357). Available 24/7.

State Health Insurance Assistance

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a free health benefits counseling service for Medicare beneficiaries and their families or caregivers. SHIP is an independent program funded by federal agencies and is not affiliated with the insurance industry. The SHIP locator can be found here <https://www.shiphelp.org/>

Benefits Checkup®

BenefitsCheckUp® is a free service of the National Council on Aging. It is an online tool that connects older adults with benefits they may qualify for by matching patient specific needs to benefit programs and eligibility requirements. <https://benefitscheckup.org/>

American Bar Association Free Legal Answers™

Free Legal Answers™ is a virtual legal advice clinic. Qualifying users post their civil legal question to their state's website. Users will then be emailed when their question receives a response. Attorney volunteers, who must be authorized to provide pro bono assistance in their state, log in to the website, select questions to answer, and provide legal information and advice. Volunteer attorneys will not answer criminal law questions. Participating states have their own page where qualifying residents will post their questions <https://abafreelegalanswers.org/>

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

Membership is not required to take advantage of free tax preparation from IRS-certified volunteers. Tax-Aide locations are open annually January to April 15 https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide/locations.html

Interprofessional care improves the outcomes of older adults with complex health problems.

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Supported by: Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program and the University of Arizona Center on Aging

This project was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U1QHP28721, Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.