

THE ARIZONA GWEP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

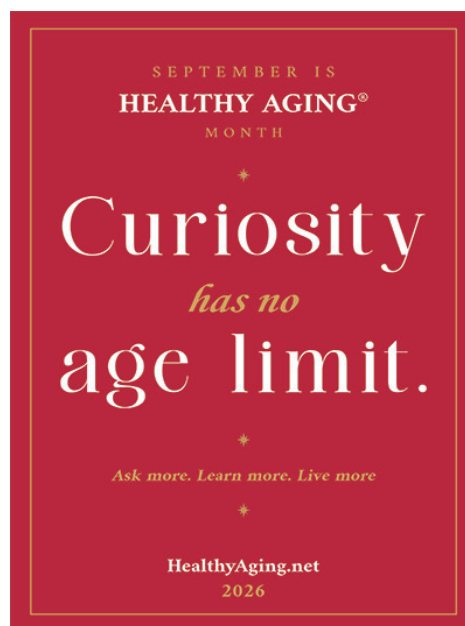


ABOUT

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](#)



Every September, [Healthy Aging Month](#) turns the spotlight on the positive side of growing older — encouraging adults to take an active role in their physical, mental, social, and financial well-being. This year's theme, "Curiosity Has No Age Limit," celebrates something we know well: that learning, connection, and engagement don't have an expiration date. Whether it's picking up a new skill, asking a new question, or trying something unfamiliar,

curiosity is one of the most powerful tools for living a fuller life at any age.

It's a fitting moment to spotlight our Advances in Aging lecture series, which puts that same spirit of curiosity into practice. This monthly lecture series brings together clinicians, researchers, and community members to explore the latest developments in geriatric care and aging science. This month we invite you to keep your own curiosity alive by joining us for our next lecture on September 14th. See [Page 2](#) for more details.

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

MEET CHASE FROM BANNER ALZHEIMER'S INSTITUTE

Chase Wernecke earned a Bachelor of Science in Communications and began his career with Special Olympics Arizona, where he helped establish Unified Sports programs on college campuses across the state. He quickly advanced to Support Programs Coordinator, overseeing initiatives within the Young Athletes, Unified College, and Healthy Lifestyle Education and Practices programs, including data management, training, reporting, and support for more than 100 coaches statewide.



In 2018, Chase joined Banner Alzheimer's Institute as an Events Specialist, supporting community outreach and engagement efforts. In 2023, he transitioned into his current role as Research Data Program Manager, where he oversees the Dementia ECHO program and supports key initiatives within the Dementia Care Partners program, helping expand dementia education, provider training, and access to quality dementia care.

In his free time, Chase enjoys bowling, a lifelong passion, as well as watching movies and spending time with his wife. Together, they are enjoying life in Texas after relocating earlier this year.

He was also a state finalist in Arizona's poetry competition in third grade for a poem honoring his grandfather, demonstrating an early passion for communication and storytelling.



Banner-University Medical Center Tucson earns **Bronze Level 3** Accreditation as a Geriatric Emergency Department. Learn more [here](#).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



ADVANCES IN AGING LECTURE SERIES

September 14th
12 - 1 pm (MST)

Hearing Loss in Older Adults

Mindy Fain, MD

[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

View archived presentations [here](#)

Download the event flyer below

Advances in Aging Lecture Series

Hearing Loss in Older Adults

LIVESTREAM

<https://streaming.biochem.arizona.edu/streaming/3269/event>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe prevalence, common causes and impact of hearing loss in older adults.
- Explain signs, symptoms and screening methods for older adults with hearing loss.
- Discuss management strategies to improve communication and quality of life.

VIEW ARCHIVED PRESENTATIONS

<https://streaming.biochem.arizona.edu/streaming/3269/event>

CME Credit: Provided by the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson

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(s): All faculty, CME planning committee members, and the CME office reviewers have disclosed that they have no financial relationships with commercial interests that would constitute a conflict of interest concerning this CME activity.

Arizona Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program

Arizona Geriatric Emergency Department

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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: SEPTEMBER 22ND @10-11:30 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. Coaching Call slides are available under Tools and Resources on the GWEP Online Community site (see below on how to register).

NEXT CALL: OCTOBER 8TH 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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JOIN US!

Virtual Caregiver Summit

FINDING YOUR WAY FORWARD



A Caregiver Guide to Simplifying Systems

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026, 9AM-1PM
Virtual event held via Zoom

Free event for family caregivers in Arizona, featuring presentations on:

- Area Agency on Aging
- ALTCS (Arizona Long Term Care System)
- Advanced Directives, and other legal resources



Pre-registration is required.

[Click here](#)

or scan the QR code to register for the event.

or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/VirtualCaregiverSummit>



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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

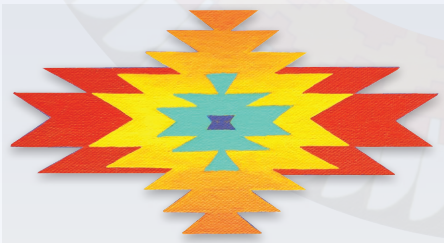
Helle Brand, PA
Clinician

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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Announcing the new AHA Age-Friendly Healthcare Impact Award

Applications open
Aug. 3 – Sept. 25.



YOUR COMMITMENT TO AGE-FRIENDLY CARE DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT

The AHA Age-Friendly Healthcare Impact Award honors organizations that have moved beyond implementation and are demonstrating enterprise-wide adoption of the 4Ms Framework: What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility. Recognizing strong leadership and evidence-based care as well as community partnerships and innovative solutions, this award celebrates those transforming the care experience for older adults.

Applications are due Sept. 25.

Visit aha.org/agefriendlyaward to learn more.

Questions about the application process? Contact Lisa O'Neill at loneill@arizona.edu