



**State of South Carolina**  
**Department on Aging**

**Henry McMaster**  
Governor

**Connie D. Munn**  
Director

**Alzheimer’s Resource Coordination Center Advisory Council**  
**Friday, December 5, 2025**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**The Alzheimer’s Resource Coordination Center Advisory Council met on Friday, December 5, 2025,  
at 10:00 am via Teams.**

*This meeting was in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act’s mandate that the public be notified when the public’s business is being done and that furthermore, the public has been notified that this meeting is accessible to individuals with disabilities, and special accommodations can be arranged if requested in advance.*

<b><u>Present:</u></b>	
Ms. Margaret Alewine	SC Department of Health and Human Services
Ms. Jessica Benson	Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Dr. Jessica Broadway	VAMC, Charleston
Mr. Andrew Boozer	SC Association of Council on Aging Directors
Ms. Jennifer Brewton	SC Department on Aging
Dr. Steve Carroll	SC Home Care and Hospice Association
Ms. Dana Daniel	SC Department on Aging
Dr. Sara English	National Association of Social Workers, SC Chapter
Ms. Sara Johnson	SC Hospital Association
Ms. Emma Kennedy	SC Department of Public Health
Dr. Maggi Miller	South Carolina Alzheimer’s Disease Registry
Ms. Kassie South	LeadingAgeSC
Ms. Janae Stowe	SC Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Ms. Taylor Wilson	Alzheimer’s Association, SC Chapter
<b><u>Absent:</u></b>	Dr. Miroslav Cuturic, Ms. Megan Byers, Dr. Miriam Evans, Ms. Carla White, Dr. Scott Habakus, Ms. Kelly Cordell, Mr. Joseph Meyers, Dr. Cynthia Port, Dr. Jennifer Nicholson Hall
<b><u>Guests:</u></b>	SC Department of Public Health - Ms. Emily Ash, Ms. Karilyn Tremblay, Ms. Jillian Catoe SC Community Commission for Community Advancement and Engagement - Ms. Alicia Paige Medical University of SC - Ms. Amy Sheets, Ms. Elana Mae Vetrano Coastal Carolina University - Fredanna McGough



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**Call to Order**

Ms. Wilson called the meeting to order at 10:05 am, read the FOI statement/Americans with Disabilities Compliance Pledge, and welcomed all council members and guests.

**Approval of Minutes**

Dr. English moved to approve the September 2025 minutes, and Dr. Carroll seconded. Minutes passed.

**Implementation Plan Update**

Ms. Tremblay provided an update on the implementation of the South Carolina Alzheimer's State Plan, which is supported by the BOLD Public Health Grant. Ms. Tremblay explained that implementation activities continue to be tracked across all objectives of the statewide plan and that many of these updates were reflected in the South Carolina Department on Aging's 2025 Annual Report.

Ms. Tremblay noted that subcommittee meetings were held in August 2025 and that another round of subcommittee meetings is planned for late January or February 2026. She described ongoing efforts to refine implementation tracking methods, including the continued use of an Excel-based tracker and the possible use of surveys to collect updates from partners. Members were encouraged to share any recent developments related to data, policy, education, advocacy, and caregiving initiatives so they could be incorporated into future reporting.

Several members provided updates on their respective initiatives. Ms. Brewton reported that eight Dementia Care Specialists are currently in place statewide. Recruitment is underway for the Trident region, with hopes to have a specialist in place by early 2026, and efforts continue to fill the position in the Waccamaw region. She highlighted the extensive education, care consultations, and partnership-building work being conducted by the specialists.

Ms. South shared that LeadingAge has partnered with the Alzheimer's Association to host a full-day educational event in Columbia. The event will focus on training caregivers and staff within continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) and expanding facilitator capacity for support groups.

Ms. Benson described several internal initiatives within the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, including the establishment of quarterly dementia-focused meetings with stakeholders. She reported that the Dementia Toolkit has been distributed statewide to providers, case managers, and residential staff. Plans are underway to offer dementia-related training to residential providers in 2026, and efforts are ongoing to support the No Wrong Door policy by educating eligibility and screening staff.

Dr. McGough from Coastal Carolina University reported renewed campus discussions around developing dementia-related programming for both practitioners and caregivers. She explained that the university is



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exploring multidisciplinary involvement, including theater, art, public health, psychology, and sociology, with the goal of offering community-based training and engagement opportunities beginning as early as summer 2026.

Mr. Boozer shared that the Office of Rural Health will host an Aging in Rural Communities conference on December 16, 2025, at which dementia toolkits will be presented. Additional updates included manuscript submissions and academic contributions shared by Dr. Margaret Miller.

**Caregiver Needs Assessment Update**

Ms. Daniel provided an update on the statewide Caregiver Needs Assessment, which recently closed with approximately 253 responses. She explained that the assessment was developed to evaluate the needs of caregivers of individuals living with dementia in South Carolina, as well as caregivers more broadly, with a particular emphasis on awareness of respite services. The survey was administered virtually and distributed through partner networks and social media channels.

Ms. Daniel noted that data review and analysis are currently underway and that a more comprehensive summary will be presented at a future ARCC or subcommittee meeting. Jennifer Brewton added that the assessment was conducted in partnership with the South Carolina Respite Coalition and includes distinct components for dementia caregivers and non-dementia caregivers. Representatives from DPH, including epidemiologists Ms. Catoe and Ms. Ash, offered analytic support to assist with data review.

**Recap from DSC Summit in Washington, DC**

Ms. Brewton and Ms. Daniel shared highlights from the Dementia Specialist Summit hosted by the Alzheimer's Association in Washington, DC. Both speakers emphasized the value of engaging with peers from other states and noted that South Carolina was frequently recognized as a strong example of effective collaboration across agencies and partners.

Key themes from the summit included the growing importance of primary care providers in dementia risk reduction, early detection, and diagnosis, as well as emerging research on biomarkers and blood-based testing. Presenters also discussed the need for person-centered communication and enhanced training for clinicians. The summit reinforced the importance of collaboration between aging services, public health agencies, and research institutions.

**U.S. Pointer Presentation and Discussion**

Ms. Wilson provided a detailed overview of the U.S. POINTER Study, a two-year clinical trial examining whether structured lifestyle interventions can reduce dementia risk and improve brain health. The study focused on nutrition, physical activity, cognitive engagement, and health monitoring, comparing outcomes between a structured intervention group and a self-guided group.



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Ms. Wilson explained that study findings demonstrated improved cognition and delayed brain aging, with the structured intervention group showing the greatest benefit. Participants also reported improvements in mood, social engagement, sleep quality, and overall health. She noted that the Alzheimer's Association has committed an additional \$40 million to continue the study and follow participants over a longer period. The results were discussed in the context of their implications for senior centers, long-term care settings, workforce development, and structured healthy aging programs.

**SC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Update**

Dr. Carroll provided an update on the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. He reported that the ADRC application was submitted on September 25, 2025, and has since been assigned to a study section following delays related to the federal government shutdown. Dr. Carroll also announced plans to launch a public-facing podcast in January 2026.

Additional updates included several related grant submissions currently under review, the publication of a special issue of the American Journal of Pathology focused on neurodegenerative diseases, and ongoing biomarker research collaborations. Dr. Carroll also highlighted efforts to expand veteran participation in ALZ-NET, with Charleston serving as an initial recruitment site.

**SC Alzheimer's Disease Registry Update**

Dr. Miller presented an update on the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Registry. She reported that 12 new data requests were received in 2025 and that the registry published five peer-reviewed manuscripts during the year, marking a record level of productivity. Research topics included dementia among individuals living with HIV, causes of death, regional differences in dementia incidence, team science approaches, and overlapping patterns between dementia and COVID-19.

Dr. Miller noted that receipt of new registry data has been delayed due to reauthorization and data governance requirements with external data sources. As a result, the annual report and county-level fact sheets will be delayed until final approvals are received. Chair Wilson reiterated the ARCC's role as the Registry Advisory Council and discussed pending legislation that would strengthen long-term protection and funding for the registry through a dedicated line item.

**Call for Nominees**

Ms. Wilson announced that elections for the ARCC executive committee will take place in March 2026. Council members were asked to submit their nominees for chair, vice-chair, and secretary to Ms. Dana Daniel at [ddaniel@aging.sc.gov](mailto:ddaniel@aging.sc.gov) by the end of February 2026.



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**Other Business:**

Ilana Vetrano, MSW, and Amy Sheets, RN, from MUSC presented an overview of the GUIDE Model, a Medicare-funded dementia care navigation program. They explained that the program provides comprehensive, patient-centered care coordination at no cost to participants and their caregivers. Services include initial medical assessments, care planning, ongoing navigation support, and access to respite benefits of up to \$2,500 annually for eligible participants. The presenters shared early observations indicating that many caregivers struggle to secure in-home respite services, particularly in rural areas, due to workforce shortages. Ms. Wilson facilitated a discussion on how these findings align with broader statewide conversations about infrastructure and workforce development. Opportunities for closer coordination with Dementia Care Specialists and other community partners were identified.

Ms. Wilson recognized Andrew Boozer and Janae Stowe for their leadership in disseminating the Brain Health Toolkit and supporting senior centers statewide. Members were encouraged to consider volunteering with local senior centers during the holiday season, especially when volunteer capacity may be reduced.

Ms. Wilson closed by expressing appreciation for the Council's continued collaboration and commitment to improving the lives of South Carolinians living with dementia and their caregivers. She acknowledged the significant progress made to date while emphasizing the importance of continued innovation and partnership.

**Adjournment/Closing**

There being no other business, Ms. Wilson adjourned the meeting at 11:28 pm.

**Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026 via Microsoft Teams**

**June 2026 – in-person meeting, TBD**