

**DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities and Aging
State Unit on Aging
Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council Meeting
Friday, February 20, 2026**

Voting Members Present: Alex DeGarmo, Jean Holt, Christopher Kelly, Tracy Lichti, Lisa Marks, Kierstin Reed, Mary Ann Stallings, David Thompson

Voting Members Absent: John Croghan, Julie Kaminski, Corie Sass

Non-Voting Members Present: Josie Rodriguez, Timothy Tesmer

Non-Voting Members Absent: Odessa Schoneberg

Council Staff Present: Joni Dulaney

Division of Developmental Disabilities and Aging Staff Present: Tony Green, Division Director; Ben Stromberg, State Unit on Aging

This meeting was held virtually. A link was provided for Council members and members of the public to attend virtually. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Tracy Lichti, Council Chair. New members Jean Holt and Alex DeGarmo were welcomed. Roll was taken and Council members introduced themselves.

Nebraska Open Meetings Act Announcement

Tracy announced that Council meetings fall under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Act is available on the Council webpage.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January 16, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Chris Kelly and seconded by Mary Ann Stallings. No corrections were requested to the minutes.

A roll call vote was taken: Yes – 6; No – 0; Abstain – 2.

Legislative Update

Legislative Bill (LB) 845 would combine the Alzheimer's Council and the State Unit on Aging Advisory Committee. Tracy Lichti provided testimony in support of the bill at the public hearing on January 23, 2026. HHS Committee members received copies of the revised list of recommended member representation that Council members created for the new Aging, Alzheimer's, and Dementia Advisory Council should LB845 pass.

Other testifiers in support of the bill were Randy Jones, Director of Aging Partners, on behalf of the Area Agencies on Aging, and Jina Ragland with AARP. Both testifiers agreed with the recommended changes for Council membership. Alex DeGarmo testified in opposition on behalf of the Alzheimer's Association. He explained that the Association feels the Alzheimer's Council and Aging Advisory Committee represent very distinct subject matter areas, noting that

Alzheimer's and dementia are a public health issue, not a normal part of aging. He also stated that merging the two groups could jeopardize eligibility for future federal BOLD grant funding and that their grants team is putting together a one-pager on this that he will share with the Council. NOTE: At the time of this hearing, Alex was an appointed member of the Council but stated in his testimony that he was representing the Alzheimer's Association; he did not identify himself as a member of the Council.

Tony Green was asked about the timeline for the bill and amendments (recommendations on member representation and any other changes to the bill). He noted that DHHS is waiting for the document from the Alzheimer's Association to review their concerns with LB845. They will see if they can come to an agreement that it will be ok, or where there are areas that would have to be rectified to move the bill forward. If LB845 passes, there will be equal representation of both groups, subcommittees will be formed, and each group will still have separate state plans.

Subcommittee Reports

Tracy reminded members that the next Annual Update Report is due to DHHS by August 17. She opened discussion on the continued work of subcommittees on the 2025 State Alzheimer's Plan priorities and whether/which priorities should be added for the 2026 report. Leads provided updates on their subcommittees:

- Chris Kelly indicated that the Public Health subcommittee has been promoting different conferences and training opportunities across the state, including a dementia conference in Kearney on March 19 and 20. He added that this subcommittee feels they have forward momentum and will continue to meet this year.
- Kierstin Reed is scheduling the next meeting of the Memory Care Rate subcommittee in March.
- The Trualta subcommittee last met in November. Their recommendation is that the State should look at [Trualta](#) as a system for caregivers statewide to access. This would be in addition to [GetSetUp](#) that the State Unit on Aging already has in place. Trualta is training and education specifically for caregivers while GetSetUp is training and education for older adults in general. One of the challenges is the cost of Trualta at approximately \$150,000 per year. There were discussions on where to obtain the funds needed. Thoughts included looking at other funding streams within state government as well as partnering with other groups outside of state government. Subcommittee members feel their work on this is completed.
- The Care Navigator Pilot Subcommittee met last week. Their recommendation is to fund a pilot project. Subcommittee members will continue to work through how to fund this and the steps needing to be taken.
- Mary Ann reported that the 211 subcommittee has not met for some time. John, subcommittee lead, is out on medical leave. The status of this subcommittee will be discussed at the March Council meeting.

The list of prioritized State Plan recommendations was sent to members prior to the meeting and was shared on screen. After review and discussion of the list, recommendations for inclusion in the 2026 report are as follows:

- Seek one-time grant funding for long-term care and assisted living communities to establish adult day care programs. In rural areas, consider senior centers, which may mean that programs would be held in off-site locations.
 - **The Memory Care Rate Subcommittee will address this.**
 - Kierstin commented that there was a bill previously introduced in the legislature that provided grant funding for implementation of childcare centers in assisted living and long-term care settings. It is possible that the subcommittee could build off of this. Funds could be allocated from the state for one-time funding. The committee could come up with a proposal that could be sponsored by an outside organization.
 - Tracy added that there are very few places in Nebraska offering adult day services. New Cassel is one of those. She has received many calls from organizations across Nebraska requesting information on how their adult day program works and wanting to come see it. This would be tremendous to have it available as an add-on, especially in rural communities.
- Develop a respite admission program for long-term care communities to enable quick admissions for emergent respite stays.
 - **A new subcommittee will be formed to address this.**
 - Lisa Marks, Kierstin, Mary Ann, Alex DeGarmo, and Tracy will form this subcommittee with additional members recruited from the public and/or Aging Advisory Committee members. Mary Ann reported that Home Instead in Lincoln is doing the GUIDE program. She will ask them to join this subcommittee. Another suggestion was someone from the VA as they have a respite program.
 - It was noted that the biggest hurdles for long-term care settings are the amount of paperwork required and associated costs, especially for short-term respite, and medication management. There are also many regulations for providing respite in assisted living or long-term care settings that would have to be changed.
 - In-home respite should also be addressed.
 - There needs to be education on what is respite.
- Under Build the Dementia Care Workforce:
 - Ensure that the Health Sciences Career Cluster of the Nebraska State Board of Education and other curricula have current content devoted to dementia.
 - Work with the Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science to develop dementia-specific conference sessions for teachers.

- David Thompson will look into these and see how it is going for the teachers. He will report on this at the March Council meeting.
- This will determine whether to create a new subcommittee that includes educators.
 - Chris will work with David on this.
 - Dr. Natalie Manly is interested in serving on a subcommittee related to school curricula.
- Work with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation to increase the workforce in long-term care facilities by using current and future national grant programs such as CPAP.
 - New Cassel has worked with Nebraska VR and uses the CPAP program daily. They also utilize the Omaha Public Schools program for workforce education.

Public Comments

Danny DeLong, an Aging Advisory Committee member, requested a list of Council subcommittees.

Meeting Schedule for 2026

The June 19, 2026, meeting date falls on Juneteenth and will need to be rescheduled as this is a federal holiday. Members agreed to move this meeting date to June 12. A revised meeting invitation will be sent.

Announcements

The next meeting is March 20, 2026, and will be held at the Jack J. Huck Continuing Education Center.

New appointments will not be made until LB845 either passes or fails to advance.

Tracy asked everyone to keep John Croghan and Corie Sass in our hearts and minds and send positive thoughts to them as they are on medical leave. She also acknowledged Lisa in her continued health battle.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.