



DRAFT MINUTES

NYS Coordinating Council for Services Related to Alzheimer's Disease
and Other Dementia
Monday, March 9, 2026
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Council Members and Representatives:

Members Present in Person: Michael Jabonaski (Department of Health), John Cochran (Office for the Aging), Elizabeth Smith-Boivin, Dr. David Hart, Dr. David Hoffman, Catherine James, Maxine Smalling (Office of Mental Health), George Shaw (Office for People With Developmental Disabilities), Thania Fernandez (State Education Department), Lisl Maloney (Office of Children and Family Services)

Members Present Virtually: Teresa Galbier, Jed Levine, James Taylor, Dr. Carol Podgorski, David Okrent, Esq, Dr. Donna de Levante Raphael

Members Absent: Dr. Louis Belzie, Dr. William Higgins, Denise Cavanaugh

NYSDOH Staff Present: Tracy Sinnott, Katie Mahar, Kimberly LaBarge, Cassandra Tsyn, Susanne Coburn, Rose Gardner, Felicia Segelken, Valerie Deetz, Michael Chittenden, Carol Rodat, Susan Lawless (Division of Legal Affairs)

Others Present: Charles Williams (Office for the Aging), Bill Gustafson, Erica Salamida, Heather O'Connor

Note: The meeting was conducted in-person and via Webex. The meeting was recorded.

Welcome, Announcements, and Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 am. Ms. Sinnott conducted roll call and introduced Ms. Thania Fernandez, new Council designee for the New York State Department of Education. Ms. Fernandez introduced herself and provided information about her role at the Department of Education.

Mr. Cochran welcomed the Council members and shared information on research connecting social isolation and the risk of developing Alzheimer's and cognitive impairment. Mr. Jabonaski provided an overview of his role within the Department of Health for the new members. Ms. Sinnott provided an overview of the plan to address the 2027 Council Report.

Approval of Minutes:

April 28, 2025, September 8, 2025, December 1, 2025. A quorum was not present to approve the minutes. Council members were provided with an opportunity to review the minutes, no feedback or concerns were noted. Ms. Lawless emphasized the

importance of in-person attendance to ensure a quorum is reached, reviewing guidelines for exceptions. Mr. Levine asked if a caregiving responsibility counts as an exception to in-person attendance. Ms. Lawless informed the Council that this exception does not meet the requirements under current law. Ms. Galbier added that she was unable to attend in person as she was on bereavement leave. Mr. Okrent advised the Council that New York State Assemblyman Steve Stern introduced an amendment to Bill A10531 which would allow for Council members to attend virtually and be included towards the quorum.

Neurology and Research Update:

Dr. Hart provided a neurology and research update, including updates on three recent studies. One study focused on exercise, and Mr. Cochran asked for clarification on recommended exercise, which Dr. Hart provided. Ms. Smith-Boivin shared details from the United States Pointer study, including recommendations for diet and exercise.

Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) New York State:

Ms. LaBarge provided an update on Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) project initiatives. She informed the Council that the Public Awareness Group (PAG) and University of Albany, College of Integrated Sciences Evaluation team for the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure will be presenting at the June Council meeting on the reach and impact of the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) Public Awareness Campaign. Ms. LaBarge reported that the Brain Health brochure is now available for distribution. Ms. LaBarge announced that a Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) tab has been added to the Alzheimer's Disease Program website. Ms. LaBarge reported upcoming projects with the Wyoming County Health Department and provided information on a Project ECHO initiative in New York State, piloting a model in the North Country region in coordination with the National Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) Public Health Center of Excellence on Risk Reduction. Ms. LaBarge shared that training sessions are underway focused on Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) community clinical linkage dementia series and reaching a variety of clinical staff in Hudson Headwaters. Ms. LaBarge is working on the Year 4 continuation application. Mr. Cochran suggested involvement with Veteran's Affairs with future Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) partnerships as well as the area Agency on Aging network. Ms. LaBarge noted that work has been conducted with the Offices for Aging staff participation in the training and workgroups.

Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) National:

Dr. Hoffman reported that there has been an increase in funding for Alzheimer's Disease Public Health Initiatives, including Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) initiatives. Dr. Hoffman noted that the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) Public Health Center of Excellence developed three guides focused on early detection for Departments of Health, community-based organizations, and health care providers. Dr. Hoffman shared that the University of Minnesota Center is in the process of developing toolkits focusing on dementia caregiving and training activities. Dr. Hoffman also shared the University of Chicago's Health Matters program is expanding training for local organizations serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to include information on brain health and heart health. Dr. Podgorski noted that focus areas need to be across the lifespan.

Master Plan for Aging:

Ms. Sinnott provided the Council with a crosswalk analysis of the Council goals and the Master Plan for Aging. Mr. Cochran noted the Master Plan for Aging was set up as recommendations and concepts to start these discussions to align with goals within other state agencies to advance the work being done. Ms. Smalling noted Master Plan for Aging proposals identified by the Council may already be implemented in states and could be reviewed and used as a model for New York State. Mr. Cochran noted that the State Office for Aging co-chairs the Master Plan for Aging with the Department of Health and remains actively involved in the implementation process.

Ms. Smith-Boivin noted that it would be beneficial to have additional information regarding training requirements for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. Ms. Maloney requested clarification if Adult Homes were included in the proposal and noted that the Family Type Home for Adults should be included in the training requirement as well. Mr. Levine advised the Council that federal staffing levels requirements have been reduced to prior levels. Mr. Levine stated that training is affected by high staff turnover and stressed the importance of consistent caregivers, especially for those caring for individuals living with dementia. Mr. Cochran noted that innovation and technology enhance people's ability to provide better care to those individuals living with dementia, which allows staff to better understand and enhance their ability to care for those in long-term care settings. Mr. Cochran stated he will facilitate a Master Plan for Aging Council workgroup for interested Council members.

Member Announcements, Public Comments:

Ms. Smalling provided the Council with information regarding work being done with the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Council, who have worked collectively with other state agencies to provide Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) education to clinicians across New York State over the past year. The Brain Injury Grand Round Webinar Series will be held on March 31, 2026 (Brain Injury 101: Understanding and Identifying Brain Injury); April 21, 2026 (Brain Injury Treatment: Psychopharmacology and Medical Interventions); and May 19, 2026 (Brain Injury: Practical Strategies for Engagement) More information can be found on the Department of Health website: (https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/traumatic_brain_injury/) Continuing education credits will be available for participating clinicians.

Ms. Smith-Boivin discussed the identified priorities from the 2025 Council report, which are brain health, and early detection and diagnosis, and she highlighted the importance of aligning resources to support these priorities. Ms. Lawless identified the Council report as the best way for the Council to show the legislature their recommendations. Ms. Lawless noted that the Council does not have authority to alter funding distribution. Dr. Podgorski identified that the lack of clinicians needs to be addressed, along with the importance of Social Workers within the Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease, to help support the treatment plans provided by the clinicians.

Ms. Smith-Boivin shared that she is presenting at the International Congress on Biophotonics conference that will be held at the University at Albany from March 18, 2026 through March 21, 2026.

Mr. Taylor shared that the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) within the next two years will roll out the training kit for Primary Care Physicians, which will include addressing difficult cognitive conversations.

Mr. Taylor provided an update on the Bridge for Young Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act of 2025 that aims to improve access to Medicare for individuals under 65 who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Hoffman encouraged Department of Health to look into a Medicaid waiver for individuals under 65 years old who received a diagnosis to help build a bridge until those individuals are Medicare eligible.

Ms. Smith-Boivin and Ms. Mahar noted that some Centers of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease are utilizing midlevel Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants as well as Geriatricians to help bridge the gap for wait lists.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 pm.

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