

Maryland Commission on Caregiving

February 5, 2025

10:30 AM -12:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/hev-nfhr-qci>

Meeting Minutes

- Commission Members Present: Shari Bailey; Mary Anne Kane Breschi; Dawnita Brown; Jennifer Eastman; Yetunde Olobatuyi; Theresa Robertson; Greg Sesek; Trina Townsend; Katherine Wehr; Molly Wisniewski
- Guests: Dorina Adams; Claudia Balog; Alexia Bishop; Estelle Brooks; Teresa Jeter-Cutting; Pearl Harmon; Bevia Hensley; Bailey House; Desiree Hung; Jillian Jasper; Terri Johnson; Ruth Kershner; Marci LeFevre; Dolapo Olomo; Kyla Pendleton; Leslie Ray; Grace Macalino Schauf; John Scott; Chalarra Sessoms; Ruth Shea; Claudia Thorne; Brenda Williams; Donna Wilson; Hilary Wiseman
- The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved:
 - Motion to Approve: Mary Anne Kane Breschi
 - Second: Shari Bailey
 - Result: Approved

Legislative Subcommittee Updates

General Notes

- Members are encouraged to share bills of interest.
- Please flag legislation that may not explicitly reference caregivers but still impacts caregivers.
- The Legislative Subcommittee meets every Monday from 3:30pm to 4:30pm during the legislative session.

Bills Discussed

- SB 192 – Military Family Inclusion Act
- HB 256 – Long-Term Resource Management (Caregiving)
- SB 151 – Vote dropped; favorable recommendation. Awaiting cross-file monitoring.

- SB 240 – Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) Advisory Council
 - Focus on caregiver representation for individuals receiving monitored services.
- HB 640 – Departmental bill (DHS)
 - Initially routed to Budget and Management; applied broadly across departments.

Overview of HB 634 – Police Training – Autism and Dementia (LEAD Act of 2026)

- Commissioner Shari Bailey introduced this piece of legislation framed as a lifespan issue affecting individuals with dementia, autism, and other conditions.

Key Points

- LEAD Act (Laila’s Elopement Awareness and Detection)
 - Training for first responders (firefighters, EMTs, law enforcement).
 - Emphasis on training the broader “ecosystem” of public safety.
- Two additional anticipated bills focused on access and coordination:
 - Resources to mitigate elopement and wandering.
 - Creation of a repository defining elopement and wandering for family caregivers.
- Importance of education at diagnosis.
- School coordination:
 - ACES Law (passed last year) now requires reporting of elopement incidents at schools.
- Crisis response planning:
 - Clear procedures for activating responses during elopement events.
 - National data shows 91% of elopement fatalities in 2024 were drownings.
 - Emphasis on identifying nearby bodies of water near schools and residences.
- Recent example cited: child with autism eloped during snowfall; responders were urged to search nearby water first.

Additional Legislative & Advocacy Updates

- HB 724 – Hearing scheduled for February 24, 2026.
- Claudia Balog shared Caring Across Maryland (CAM) Legislative Agenda:
 - Coalition focused on centralizing caregiving across sectors.
 - Addressing workforce shortages across the healthcare continuum.
 - 2026 priorities include:
 - Hospital Safe Staffing Act
 - Staffing committees to address safety and workforce conditions.
 - Resources directed toward long-term care settings.

- Minimum Home Care Wage & Sick Leave Act
 - Sponsored by Delegate Bagnall.
 - Establishes a \$20/hour wage floor and PTO accrual regardless of employer size.
- HB 446 – Dementia Services Bill
 - Testimony due: Tuesday, 2/10
 - Hearing: 2/12 at 1:00 PM
- HB 624 – Hospital Safe Staffing Act
 - Hearing: 2/18
- Brain Health Toolkit:
 - Supported by the Alzheimer’s Association
 - Focus on early detection, diagnosis, and risk reduction.

Presentation *From Overwhelm to Agency: Caregiver Identity as a Missing Link in Support Across the Lifespan*

Presenter: Dr. Grace Macalino Schauf, Founder of Kapwa AllCare

Kapwa Meaning: Kapwa is a Filipino concept meaning *shared identity. Shared humanity. Shared being.* It’s the recognition that we are connected - that our lives are intertwined and that no one is meant to carry care alone. [Learn More](#)

Background & Lived Experience

- Shared personal caregiving journey supporting aging parents with dementia.
- Highlighted challenges of long-distance caregiving, family dynamics, emotional labor, and the “sandwich generation.”
- Described feelings of resentment, isolation, unnamed grief, and lack of systemic support.

Caregiver Identity Framework

- Stage 0 – Questioning: “Am I a caregiver?” (highest risk group)
- Stage 1 – Disorienting: Loss of self, confusion, overload.
- Stage 2 – Overwhelming: Everything feels consuming; advice from others doesn’t land.
- Stage 3 – Learning: Building skills, systems, and boundaries.
- Stage 4 – Managing: Confidence and role clarity.
- Stage 5 – Integrating: Caregiving becomes part of identity without replacing the self.

Key Insights

- Caregiver identity varies across life domains (health, finances, family).

- Identity is shaped by culture, family roles, and lived experience.
- Naming caregiving provides a lens and map, not just a label.
- Support systems must meet caregivers where they are, even if they don't yet identify as caregivers.

Workplace Implications

- 1 in 4 workers are caregivers.
- Workplaces are critical access points for caregiver support.
- Strategies include:
 - Lunch-and-learns (e.g., Barclays Bank example)
 - Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
- Aligning policy with caregiver identity improves engagement and outcomes.

Community & Systems

- Emphasis on warm handoffs and navigation support.
- Connected Care Network concept introduced.
- Local examples referenced: COGS, GROWS, Howard County, Planning for Senior Life.

Presentation Discussion Highlights

- Members reflected on:
 - Loss of identity and community.
 - Difficulty prioritizing competing family needs.
 - Parents not being recognized as caregivers.
 - The permanence of life changes after caregiving begins.
- Veteran and military caregiver perspectives:
 - Mission-driven caregiving identity.
 - Loss of self baked into military culture.
 - VA programs addressing caregiver whole health and wellbeing.
 - <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/CAREGIVER/support/Caregiver-Health-Wellbeing-Coaching.asp>

Questions/Concerns/Announcements/Updates

- The Maryland Department of Health is forming a new advisory group. The intention of this future coalition is to bring all major stakeholders together to both identify and address systemic or cross-agency/service issues that negatively impact families with

children or youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) or disabilities. This coalition of CYSHCN stakeholders would be something akin to the Developmental Disability Council but would address issues for all types of disability rather than specifically development disabilities. If anyone is interested in joining this coalition please contact Bailey House at bailey.house@maryland.gov.

- Theresa Robertson announced that her recently launched business Caregiver CEO will be hosting an event on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 to learn more please contact Theresa Robertson at theresa@thecaregiverceo.com.
- MCC Commissioner, Shari Bailey and MCC Chair, Molly Wisniewski will be on WMAR Midday on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 to share about the Commission's mission and activities.
- The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) will host a webinar today, February 5, Molly Wisniewski will share the Maryland Department of Aging's work through the Administration for Community Living (ACL) Implementation Grant. The Maryland Commission on Caregiving has been actively engaged in informing and shaping several components of the grant initiatives, helping to ensure that caregiver perspectives remain central to this important work.

Meeting Adjourned