

Maryland Commission on Caregiving

November 6, 2025

10:30 AM -12:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Google Meet joining info

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

Or dial: (US) +1 775-442-4189 PIN: 786 637 297#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/hev-nfhr-qci?pin=2760472835770>

Meeting Minutes

- Commission Members Present: Julia Abate; Shari Bailey; Mary Anne Kane Breschi; Dawnita Brown; Jennifer Eastman, Isabella “Bella” Guyott; Yetunde Olobatuyi; Theresa Robertson; Greg Sese; Trina Townsend; Patricia Morris; Molly Wisniewski; Delegate Jamila Woods
- Guests: Dorina Adams; Kenyn Benjamin; Estelle Brooks; Wendy Buendia; Chanel Crowder; Teresa Jeter-Cutting; Pearl Harmon; Terri Johnson; Ernestine Jolivet; Claire Liu; Melissa Karcher; Grace Macalino; Demia Noble; Dolapo Olomo; Kyla Pendleton; Leslie Ray; Melissa Reuland; Chalarra Sessoms; John Scott; Ruth Shea; Jenn Strathman; Mark Tesoro; Claudia Thorne; Donna Wilson; Hilary Wiseman; Skyler Young
- The October meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with the following corrections:
 - ACL updated to ACF (Administration for Children and Families)
 - Attendance updated: Patricia Woods → Patricia Morris
- Motion to Approve: Mary Anne
 - Second: Shari Bailey
 - Result: Approved

Introductions

- The Commission welcomed New Commissioner:
 - Isabella “Bella” Guyott from the Maryland Department of Health.
 - Guests from the Memory and Aging Community Advisory Board, who joined for the presentation portion of the meeting.
- Full introductions for new members and guests will be conducted at the next meeting.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

- December: No formal meeting. An in-person luncheon will be held on Friday, December 12, 2025 – 12:00 to 2:00 PM in Annapolis, MD.
- January: No meeting.
- Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, February 5, 2026
- Calendar invites will be updated accordingly.

National Family Caregiver Month Calendar of Events Update

- Commission members shared updates on events and activities occurring throughout November:
 - Theresa Robertson: Montage caregiver story: Videos launching November 11. Theresa will be starting Caregiver support groups: Ongoing for family caregivers.
 - Patricia Morris: Hands of Hope will be hosting a Caregiver Luncheon on November 22 caregivers will be gathering at an Italian restaurant in PG County (20 attendees expected). To show appreciation for all Caregivers do and give.
 - Dorinda Adams: Delivered opening remarks at the National Family Caregiver Appreciation event hosted by MAC, Inc. on November 5th; Dorinda was also interviewed by Channel 47/Delmarva Public Media. Dorinda also noted that the AARP Maryland Needs Assessment: Document outlining process and focus areas will be shared soon.
 - Dr. Claudia Thorne: Shared her work on ongoing research on caregiver resilience.
 - Mary Anne Kane Breschi: Developmental Disabilities Administration is collecting caregiver stories; promoting National Family Caregiver Month through DDA networks.
 - Mark Tesoro: African American Caregivers Conference Date: Saturday, November 15, 8:30 AM–1:30 PM Location: Morgan State University, University Student Center Calvin and Tina Tyler Ballroom, Baltimore
 - Hilary Wiseman: VA Maryland Health Care System – National Family Caregiver Month Event Date: Wednesday, November 19, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM Location: American Legion Post 130, 8666 Silver Lake Drive, Perry Hall Includes lunch, activities, resource tables, and connection opportunities. Open to all caregivers, including those not enrolled in VA programs. RSVP: MarylandCaregiverSupportRSVP@va.gov or 443-253-5376
 - Earnestine Jolivet: Highlighted Mark's acknowledgment of the upcoming African American Conference promoting partnership with Virginia I. Jones African American Forum on Memory Loss.

- Shari Bailey: “We CARE” Conference on November 19 featuring 13 speakers; media sponsors include WMAR, *The Afro*, and AARP.
- Great appreciation was expressed for the strong engagement and creativity across events for National Caregivers Month.

Today’s Presentation: Demonstration of the Johns Hopkins Memory Care Family Checklist (launching in 2026)

- Presenters
 - Melissa Reuland, Senior Research Program Manager, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
 - Jenn Strathman, Project Manager, Maryland Information Network
 - Mark Tesoro, Cognitive & Behavioral Health, Maryland Department of Aging
 - Skyler Young, CEO, Connect 211
- Overview
 - Presenters provided an overview and demonstration of the new Family Caregiver Checklist, developed through an ACL grant and aligned with the Johns Hopkins Dementia Care Needs Assessment.
- MDOA Assessment Tool Development (Mark Tesoro)
 - Successes
 - Effective use of ACL funding
 - Strong privacy protections
 - Save-and-return functionality
 - Challenges
 - Complex systems integration
 - Lessons Learned
 - Tools allow users to self-select resource areas
 - Emphasis on interactivity and accessibility (5th–7th grade reading level)
 - No long-term retention of personal information
 - Timeline
 - Sept–Dec 2025: Validation, resource finalization, spell check, demos with MCC and MAP
 - Jan 2026: Tool launch anticipated
- Checklist Features (Johns Hopkins)
 - Built on validated clinical tools (MIND program; Dementia Care Needs Assessment)
 - Includes **33 items** for persons living with dementia across health, behavioral, safety, daily living, and decision-making domains
 - Includes caregiver-focused questions on education and health
 - Tailored resource recommendations based on zip code (MAP and 211)
 - Written at an accessible reading level

- Live Demonstration
 - Highlights included:
 - Approximately 50 total questions, divided into small, manageable sections
 - Progress bar to track completion
 - Simplified “yes” inputs and bolded text for readability
 - Email required to receive report; submitted data is not stored
 - Summary report using color-coded indicators:
 - Red: Urgent
 - Yellow: Needs attention
 - Green: Doing well
 - Feedback collected through a comment box and final review page
- Q&A Highlights
 - Patricia – “How can we help?”
 - Emphasized the importance of a shared vision and cross-agency partnership.
 - Reiterated that community wisdom and lived experience are critical to the project's success.
 - Kenyn – Project Intent & Vision
 - Explained that the opportunity emerged as the team explored how to become more personalized in identifying and supporting needs.
 - Partnership with Hopkins and 211 allowed the concept to be actualized.
 - Data on Marylanders’ needs helped shape the tool’s design.
 - Noted the importance of fast, accessible resource matching—especially for caregivers under stress.
 - Skyler – Tool Development & Data Insight
 - As the developer overseeing backend integration with 211, Skyler highlighted:
 - The tool is grounded in clinical validation developed by Johns Hopkins.
 - The matching algorithm pairs clinical responses with community-based resources.
 - The tool was built to help individuals communicate their needs clearly and receive relevant supports quickly.
 - Mary Anne – Experience with Demo & Access Questions
 - She completed a demo but did not receive the resulting report and questioned whether her email was submitted incorrectly.
 - Expressed strong support for the tool and its need across the entire system.
 - Asked:

- How will users be introduced to the tool—via 211 or case managers?
- How prominent will it be on the MAP website?
- How will the tool help illustrate prevalence data, such as Alzheimer’s in a county?
- Team clarified:
 - The tool is now live on the MAP website for Demo testers only.
 - A Department of Health press release will accompany the official launch.
 - A dashboard is planned to link utilization and prevalence data.
- A concern was raised about the historical difficulty of maintaining resource lists and whether the tool allows for honest limitations, including saying “no” to certain supports.
 - Kenyn Response:
 - Digital tools cannot replace human interaction—they only enhance it.
 - Many more phases of development are planned, including:
 - A formal care loop for follow-up
 - Integration with CRISP and AAA/MAP sites
 - Budget constraints limited Phase 1, but expansion is anticipated.
 - The generated report assists physicians and connects them with community resources.
 - As integration grows, the tool will ensure stronger connections between providers and community-based support.
- Melissa – Provider Communication & Advocacy
 - Highlighted the need to help caregivers talk with providers, advocate for what they need, and maximize the limited time they have in medical appointments.
 - Noted that caregivers often need language, scripts, or guidance on how to communicate concerns.
- Bella – Resource Vetting and Data Usage
 - Questions:
 - When 211 adds resources to the site, are they vetted?
 - Is there tracking of which resources users access most?
 - Kenyn Response:
 - Every resource in the system is validated by the 211 backend team.
 - Analytics are embedded to track:

- Resource searches
 - User selections
 - Whether resources were effective
 - This helps strengthen ongoing improvements and ensure relevance.
- Dr. Harmon – Asked whether the tool is intended only for individuals with cognitive impairment.
 - Emphasized the importance of tools supporting people who are transitioning out of the caregiving role (“life after caregiving”).
- Dorinda- Noted that caregiving is a lifespan issue, not limited to older adults. AARP’s workgroup is composed almost entirely of former caregivers with deep wisdom to share. Their needs assessment aligns with statewide data showing significant need for:
 - Navigation support
 - Resource access
- AARP is an active partner in the pilot and reiterated that membership is not required to access resources or supports.
- Mary Anne – Asked about the cost of development.
 - Original project cost estimate: \$130,000.
 - Grant covered \$80,000.
 - The remaining cost was absorbed through internal adjustments and technical scoping.
 - Final technical costs came in under \$30,000 after refining the project scope.
- Patricia – Emphasized the central importance of community wisdom and caregiver knowledge in designing meaningful tools.
- Theresa – Asked whether other states have implemented similar tools.
 - Johns Hopkins team confirmed the tool has been piloted in other states and has shown strong results.
- Next Steps
 - Continued development toward deeper integration with CRISP and AAA/MAP systems.
 - Public launch supported by a Department of Health press release.
 - Ongoing collection of user data to refine matching and improve statewide resource coordination.
 - Follow-up with participants who did not receive their demo reports (e.g., Mary Anne).

Announcements & Updates

- Shari: Inquired about how Commission information is shared on social media. A subcommittee will be formed for outreach and marketing; interested members should contact Molly.
- Hilary: In 2026 VA Maryland Health Care - Geriatric and Extended Care Services including Home Health Aide, Adult Day Health Services and In-Home Respite will move to offering these services through a bundling model. Veterans and Caregivers will work with the Veteran's Primary Care Social Worker and our GEC team to address any changes to their services. These changes will not impact the additional respite benefit available through the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.
 - Mary Anne: Noted potential impacts on home health aide hours for veterans; increased flexibility is anticipated despite possible reductions.
- Grace: Highlighted an upcoming article that she has coming out in *Generations Today* on caregiver identity and Gen X caregiver experiences. Grace will share with the Commission when it is out.
- Ruth: Shared information on the "Taming the Chaos of Caregiving Institute" and upcoming resources.
- Patricia: Expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for the work underway.

Meeting Adjourned