



# 2024 AGING ROADMAP ANNUAL UPDATE



LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO

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A: AGING ROADMAP ACTION PLAN 2024-2028

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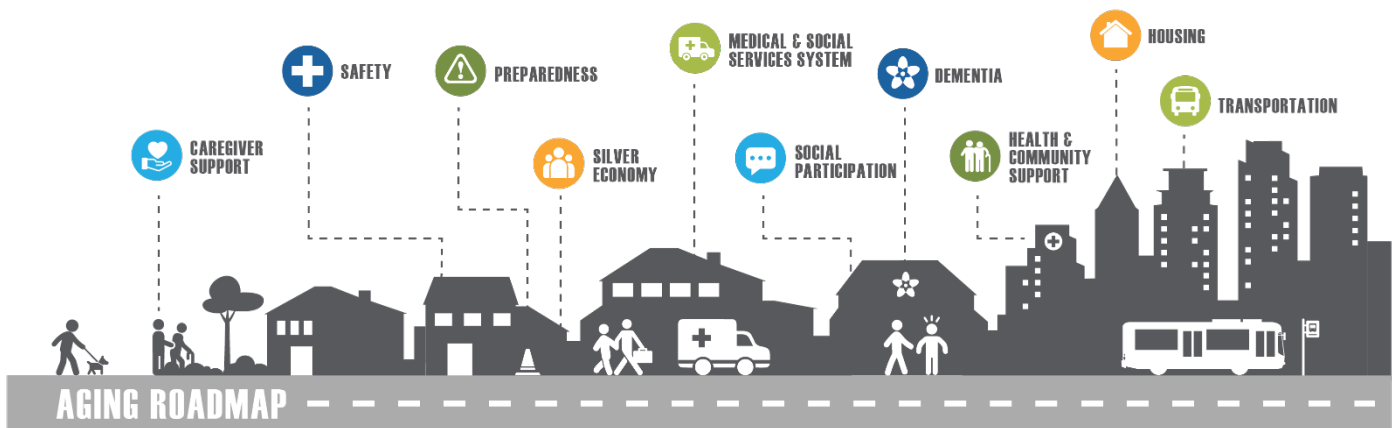
# INTRODUCTION

The older adult population in San Diego County is rapidly growing, becoming more diverse, and becoming a larger part of the community. The Aging Roadmap is the County of San Diego’s (County) regional vision and framework for supporting healthy aging for people of all ages. It is the product of ongoing community input and collaboration that began in 2016 when the County joined the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Building upon initial age-friendly efforts, the Aging Roadmap was approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) on September 24, 2019 (4) and serves as the local “Master Plan for Aging” for our region. Within the Aging Roadmap are programs and initiatives designed to create age-friendly and dementia-friendly communities so that we can all age well.

This annual report provides an update on progress and accomplishments within the ten priority areas of the Aging Roadmap throughout Fiscal Year 2023-24:

- Health & Community Support
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Transportation
- Dementia
- Caregiver Support
- Safety
- Preparedness
- Silver Economy
- Medical & Social Services System

While the Aging Roadmap is led by the County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Aging & Independence Services (AIS), the accomplishments represent the efforts of multiple County departments and community collaborations. This report also highlights the County’s strategic approach and next steps towards reaching the vision for each of the ten priority areas.



## A Growing and Diverse Aging Population

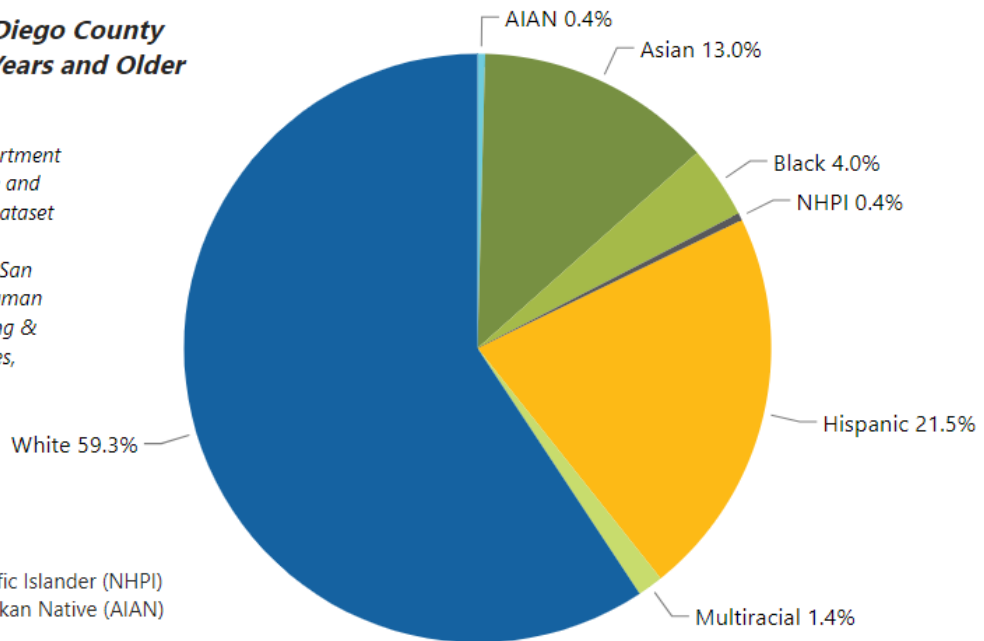
San Diego County is home to a growing population of diverse older adults. In 2022, SANDAG estimated there were nearly 3.3 million people currently residing in San Diego County, with approximately 709,690 residents over the age of 60. By 2029, the number of adults aged 60 and older in San Diego County is expected to increase to more than 824,300 (SANDAG, Series 15 Regional Forecast, San Diego County (2024)), making up 24.7 percent of the San Diego County population, up from 21.6 percent in 2022. Additionally, the fastest growing age group in San Diego County, those 85 years and older, is expected to increase from 64,854 in 2022 to 75,740 by 2029. Our region must continue to work collaboratively and proactively to meet the needs of this growing population of older adults. The Aging Roadmap provides a flexible framework that the County and the community continue to rely on to promote collaboration, improve coordination, and strengthen San Diego County’s system of care.

The Aging Roadmap embraces the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of older adults in the region. California Department of Finance reported that in 2022, 59.3% of all San Diego County older adults aged 60 years and older were white. This percentage is expected to decrease between now and 2050, primarily because of an increase in the number of Hispanic older adults (from 21.5% of the older adult population in 2022 to 30.9% in 2050). In 2022, an estimated 13.0% were Asian, 4.0% were black, 1.4% were multiracial, 0.4% were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.4% were American Indian or Alaskan Native (California Department of Finance, P-3: State and County Projections Dataset). Recognizing this diversity, the County works to ensure that residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have opportunities to be engaged in their community and access needed services to support healthy aging.

**Ethnicity of San Diego County Adults Aged 60 Years and Older**

Source: California Department of Finance, P-3: State and County Projections Dataset (2024).

Prepared by: County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services, 2024.



## Community Engagement

Community engagement lies at the center of the County's culture and operations. AIS has a long history of conducting robust community engagement efforts to inform the development of programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities. One way that AIS stays in touch with the community of older adults in our region is with the AIS Advisory Council. With members representing each Board district and the community at large, this group meets monthly and makes recommendations on issues such as how AIS can be inclusive of different older adults. In addition to hosting the Advisory Council, AIS staff coordinate ten ongoing community committees addressing issues ranging from fall prevention to transportation, thus maintaining and building connections with older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers, and service providers. These groups have been involved in the creation and shaping of the Aging Roadmap.

The Aging Roadmap was developed to regularly incorporate community input. Most recently, in Fall 2023, AIS invited input from the community as part of two planning processes. Federally-designated Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), such as AIS, develop an Area Plan every four years to guide their use of Older Americans Act funding. The AIS Area Plan community engagement process was designed to ensure the public had the opportunity to share their needs and express input on issues that were relevant to both the Area Plan and the Aging Roadmap.

Starting in September 2023, AIS conducted seventeen (17) community feedback sessions with older adults, caregivers, persons with disabilities, and service providers across a range of topic areas and localities in San Diego County. The sessions were held at senior centers, community centers, and similar locations with support from partner and service organizations. Eight of these sessions were fully open to the public while the other nine involved closed groups that had been specifically invited by the host organizations (e.g., attendees of a day program for persons living with dementia). The purpose of the sessions was to hear from participants on a number of topics related to quality of life, caregiving, social isolation, community gathering spaces, public awareness of services, and to understand the greatest needs and priorities of various older adult communities. Each two-hour session included 20-to-40 participants. Some sessions included multi-lingual support or were conducted in a language other than English.

**We Want to Hear from Older Adults, Caregivers, and Persons with Disabilities!**

**UPCOMING FEEDBACK SESSION**

**Tuesday  
November 14<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**

Congregational Tower  
288 F St.,  
Chula Vista 91910  
*\*Spanish Interpretation available*

**All are welcome!  
RSVP requested  
Lunch will be provided for those who RSVP.**

**For more information, visit:  
www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov**

**ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:**  
Agendas and meeting materials are available in alternative formats upon request. Call (858) 495-5500 or email [ais.getmoreneeded@csd.sandiegocounty.ca.gov](mailto:ais.getmoreneeded@csd.sandiegocounty.ca.gov) to request a disability-related accommodation or alternate language interpretation. To the extent possible, submit requests for accommodation at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting so that arrangements may be made.

**To RSVP, visit:  
surveymonkey.com/r/APfeedbacksessionsRSVP23  
Or call: (858) 495-5500**

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Principles of equity guided the community engagement process and selection of sites to ensure that the sessions would capture the voices of diverse cohorts of older adults. Attendees included people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, non-English speakers, people with disabilities, people with dementia, caregivers, refugees, people from the LGBTQIA+ population, housing insecure older adults, and those living on a low-income. The groups were facilitated by AIS outreach staff with experience in the particular communities, using a set of questions in plain language and a conversational style to elicit discussion. Also, the host organizations' staff and interpreters helped to increase cultural comfort.

### Community Feedback Sessions

- **Access to Independence, North Inland Live Well Center, Escondido** - Older adults with disabilities
- **Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team Virtual Meeting** – Primarily aging services professionals
- **AIS Advisory Council**
- **Congregational Tower, Chula Vista** - Predominantly Hispanic/Latino older adult attendees (Spanish interpretation provided)
- **Fallbrook Senior Center, Fallbrook** - Older adults living in rural areas
- **Gary & Mary West Senior Wellness Center, Downtown San Diego** - Diverse group of attendees including low-income and housing insecure older adults
- **George L. Stevens Senior Center, San Diego** - Predominantly African American attendees
- **Jewish Family Service of San Diego, Session 1** - Persons living with dementia
- **Jewish Family Service of San Diego, Session 2** - Care partners for persons living with dementia
- **Mira Mesa Senior Center, San Diego** – Older adults in suburban neighborhood
- **Oceanside Country Club Senior Center, Oceanside** – Older adults in North County
- **Salvation Army, El Cajon** - Diverse group of attendees including members of the refugee population and low-income and housing insecure older adults (with Arabic interpretation)
- **San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force Virtual Meeting** – Primarily professionals
- **San Diego LGBT Center, San Diego** - Diverse group of attendees including those from the LGBTQIA+ population
- **Silvercrest Senior Residence, El Cajon** - Predominantly Arabic and Chaldean-speaking older adult attendees (conducted in Arabic and Chaldean)
- **Villa Merced Apartments, Casa Familiar, San Diego** - Predominantly Hispanic/Latino population (conducted in Spanish)
- **Virtual Session** – Mix of older adults and professionals



In addition to the community input sessions conducted in Fall 2023, older adults in San Diego had the opportunity to complete the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA). The California Department of Aging (CDA) worked with civic engagement firm Polco to administer the survey in local planning service areas, such as San Diego County. Older adult households were selected to participate at random to generate a representative sample. The survey also had an open participation option so that any older adult resident over the age of 55 could participate. Additional methods of gathering input included a solicitation of comments by residents that were submitted via the County’s Engage San Diego platform and by email.

### **Needs Assessment Results**

The results from the CASOA survey combined with the input from the community feedback sessions, Engage San Diego platform, and resident emails, yielded a snapshot of the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities in the region. The issues voiced by the community in this round of input were similar to the needs identified when the Aging Roadmap was first developed, and the ten priority areas were determined. The chart on the next page outlines the most frequently raised issues and concerns. This input has informed the development and implementation of many programs and initiatives in the Aging Roadmap Action Plan for 2024-2028 (see Appendix A).



## Frequently Expressed Needs

- Increased access to **information** and resources
- Problems with **housing** (affordability and accessibility)
  - Resources for older adults experiencing **homelessness**
- Concerns about **social isolation**
- Need for reliable and accessible **transportation** (public and special purpose)
- Inclusion and care for persons living with **Dementia**
- Training and support for **caregivers**
- **Safety** (risk of falls, fraud, scams, and mobility concerns)
- **Economic issues** (cost of living, employment)
- Challenges with **healthcare** (physical and mental)



### Alignment with California’s Master Plan for Aging

The increasing population of older adults is not unique to San Diego County. This shift in demographics is occurring across the state and nation, as well as in many countries worldwide. In June 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom called for the development of the Master Plan for Aging (MPA). This comprehensive plan was then developed with significant community input from the public, stakeholders, and partners through robust outreach efforts, including the participation of San Diego County residents. With “Five Bold Goals,” the MPA serves as a multi-sector blueprint to prepare for the growing population of older adults across the state and create a California for all ages.

In January 2024, the MPA released its Third Annual Report, highlighting progress across all Five Bold Goals, as well as legislative successes and local implementation highlights. The MPA includes more than 90 initiatives to accomplish the goals, building upon the work of partners in advancing person-centered and equity-focused age- and disability-friendly policies, programs, services, and research.

The Five Bold Goals include:

1. Housing for All Ages & Stages
2. Health Reimagined
3. Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation
4. Caregiving That Works
5. Affording Aging

There is a general alignment of the two frameworks’ focus areas, and many of the goals of the County’s Aging Roadmap support the goals of the MPA.



## Progress in Priority Areas and Next Steps

Each of the following sections describe the vision and work by the County and its partners in the Aging Roadmap’s ten priority areas. The sections include a brief description of the current landscape of programs and initiatives, key accomplishments of Fiscal Year 2023-24 (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024), and anticipated next steps to advance the vision for the priority area.

The year 2024 marks the completion of ten years of the County’s Alzheimer’s Project. Accomplishments of the project are described in the Dementia section as well as in the more extensive Alzheimer’s Project 2024 Annual Report that comprises Appendix B. Accomplishments in the Dementia priority area include improvements to our regions’ electronic medical record systems to track patients’ cognitive evaluation scores as well as education on how community members can be more helpful and inclusive with people living with dementia.

There has been significant progress towards advancing the vision of creating more age-friendly communities to support healthy aging for our diverse region. Much of the progress across the ten priority areas has involved increasing equity by reaching historically under-resourced populations. Many written resources were translated from English into the current threshold languages for our region: Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, Korean, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese. Also, temporary funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was used to advance goals in many of the priority areas, including Dementia, Health & Community Support, Social Participation, and Transportation. These programs included activities ranging from intergenerational garden creation to technology training for isolated older adults.



Readers may want to refer to the Aging Roadmap Action Plan 2024 – 2028 in Appendix A. The Action Plan shows the work that is expected to occur over the next four years -- it simplifies the extensive array of efforts into a chart for each of the ten priority areas. Each chart shows the programs and initiatives along with the associated County departments and community collaboratives that lead the work.





# HEALTH & COMMUNITY SUPPORT



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

*“Getting this iPad through IHSS (Tech2Connect) drastically improved the quality of my life. All of a sudden, I had access to social interactions through its video chat feature, which [helped to improve] my mental health issues (arising from severe isolation). It also improved my physical health since I was able to attend doctor appointments remotely via my health portal app.”*

Tech2Connect Participant

## Vision:

When changes and challenges in health occur, older adults and their families are able to find and access relevant resources, support, and care in their community. The community promotes mental health and physical health, for people of all ages and abilities.

## Current Landscape:

A variety of social service organizations, senior and community centers, businesses, and other organizations serve older adults in San Diego County. To help older adults access these services, AIS Call Center staff provide information and assistance on programs provided by the County and community agencies. 211 San Diego gives residents access to more than 6,000 services and resources via a searchable online database and 24-hour, confidential phone-based support.

HHS departments provide – either directly or via contracted organizations – an array of programs for health promotion and mental wellbeing. AIS provides the Feeling Fit Club fitness program, Tai Chi classes, Healthier Living workshops for people with chronic conditions, nutrition education, and programs to improve the policy, systems and environments in our communities to promote healthy lifestyles. HHS Behavioral Health Services (BHS) provides prevention and early intervention mental health programs, as well as services for people with Serious Mental Illness.

Most of the above programs are conducted in collaboration with community partners and

with significant community input, which influences the programs. In order to reach diverse groups of older adults, the programs are hosted at a wide variety of sites, including but not limited to senior centers, community centers, churches, and libraries.

As mentioned previously, AIS hosts the AIS Advisory Council, which is one way that staff receive input from older adult residents. Also, the AIS Health & Community Engagement team coordinates ten community committees that work on collaborative projects. The committees' focus areas include general outreach and advocacy in the three regional Community Action Networks (SoCAN, NorCAN, and SanDi-ECAN), caregiver support, dementia, fall prevention, health promotion, housing, social participation, and transportation. Through these committees, staff collaborate with partners, host community events, create educational materials, and provide presentations that connect residents to these resources and services.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, accomplishments in the Health & Community Support priority area increased social inclusion and wellbeing through technology and engaged residents in a range of mental health and health promotion programs and activities. Outreach and engagement efforts provided access to relevant resources, support, and care.

#### ***Tech2Connect: IHSS Technology for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing***

Launched in early 2023, the IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services) Technology for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing program, also known as Tech2Connect, addresses social isolation



among homebound and isolated IHSS recipients, as well as IHSS caregivers. Eligible participants receive a tablet, in-person technology instruction, and support to connect with telehealth or mental health services and social engagement opportunities. This initiative was approved by the Board on June 8, 2021 (3) as part of the County's ARPA framework. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, Tech2Connect served 601 participants, 504 of whom were IHSS recipients and 97 of whom were IHSS caregivers. More than 1,300 participants have been served by the program since its inception. In Spring 2024, the program was recognized by the National Association of Counties with an Achievement Award.

#### ***Older Adult Mental Health***

Depression and other mental health conditions are not an inevitable part of aging. Various mental health programs and activities led by BHS and their contracted community partners addressed caregivers' and older adults' needs.



- Southern Caregiver Resource Center *Caregiver Support Services* program reached 309 caregivers with mental health early intervention education services to support their personal wellbeing. The organization also disseminated mental health prevention education materials to thousands of individuals through countywide resource events and presentations.
- The Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) Positive Solutions program served 257 older adults using the evidence-based Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS) for in-home and community-based settings.
- UPAC’s Elder Multicultural Access to Services and Support (EMASS) program served 875 older adults with community-based mental health prevention education and resource sharing training sessions. It also reached 529 older adult refugees including 149 of Afghani origin.
- BHS and AIS screened 635 older adults for depression and provided them with information on where to seek follow-up services. These screenings were conducted during the annual “Check Your Mood” day in October, in addition to other times throughout the year and

in addition to the regularly provided mental health resource information both departments share with the public.

### ***AIS Health Promotion Programs***

The popular Feeling Fit Club fitness classes served more than 1,200 residents across the region, including through a new site in Alpine. The program also continues to attract viewers of its televised and web version of the class. Evidence-based Tai Chi classes served 459 residents through in-person and virtual formats. Adults living with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and chronic pain, had the opportunity to learn how to better manage their condition by taking the six-week evidence-based, self-management program known as Healthier Living. Eighty-three residents completed the program. Additionally, 146 residents participated in nutrition classes.



### ***Outreach and Engagement***

A variety of community outreach and education efforts provided older adults, caregivers, and people with disabilities information on available resources. One of the primary ways the community obtains resource information is through the AIS Call Center. In







### NEXT STEPS

Communicating about County and community resources will continue to be a top priority. This is in alignment with residents' wishes as expressed through the community engagement sessions hosted by AIS in the Fall of 2023. The County will continue efforts to increase outreach to traditionally underserved and diverse communities.

The County and contracted partners will continue to provide essential services to support older adult physical health and mental health via ongoing programs such as AIS fitness programs and health workshops, and BHS programs Positive Solutions and EMASS, offered by UPAC. Entering its final year of temporary funding, IHSS Tech2Connect will continue to reduce social isolation and increase access to social engagement and mental health resources, thereby supporting participants' overall health and wellness.

AIS and other County departments will continue to coordinate and meet with community committees on priority issues. These partnerships facilitate outreach efforts and inform the development of relevant programming.

## Learn More

Want to get involved? Join one of the following ten community committees and make a difference! These teams are easy to access. Many meet virtually.

- Caregiver Coalition of San Diego: [www.CaregiverCoalitionSD.org](http://www.CaregiverCoalitionSD.org)
- San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force: [www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org](http://www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org)

For information on the following committees, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) and click on “Community Partners”:

- Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team
- Age Well Housing Team
- Age Well Social Participation & Inclusion Team
- Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team
- AIS Health Promotion Committee
- Community Action Networks
  - NorCAN (North County)
  - SanDi-ECAN (Central and East County)
  - SoCAN (South County)

To sign up for e-blasts from AIS and partners and subscribe to the AIS Newsletter, email [HNSA.AIS-CAN@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:HNSA.AIS-CAN@sdcounty.ca.gov).



# HOUSING



## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, construction was completed on three older adult designated permanent supportive housing developments across the county. These developments support 251 older adult households.

### **Vision:**

Older adults live in safe and affordable housing that is located near goods, services, and activities, all of which allow them to age in their community.

### **Current Landscape:**

The housing shortage and high cost of living continue to affect many populations in California and nationwide, including older adults. Affordable housing production is a top priority for the County and many local cities, to address the needs of unhoused and lower-income community members. Older adults, particularly those who do not own a home, are especially susceptible to the high cost of housing as many are living on fixed incomes.

At least 10,605 San Diegans are experiencing homelessness—a 3% increase from the previous year—as tracked in January 2024 by the annual WeAllCount Point-in-Time Count. The number of unsheltered individuals increased by 18% over the past year. While the 2024 Point-in-Time Count did not track individuals over the age of 55, the 2023 Point-in-Time Count found that approximately 2,670, or 26% of people experiencing homelessness in the region are aged 55 or older and over half of those individuals (56%) were unsheltered. As it is impossible to find every unhoused person for the annual count, these figures are an underestimate of the true unhoused population.

Several County departments address the multi-faceted issue of housing for older adults, including one department in Land Use and

Environment Group and four departments in Health and Human Services Agency (HHS).

Within the **Land Use and Environment Group**, the **Planning and Development Services (PDS)** department conducts long range land use planning for the unincorporated areas of the county. PDS addresses zoning and building requirements, including incentives for developers to build affordable housing, Accessory Dwelling Units (also called ADUs and granny flats), and other housing suitable for older adults.

Within **HHS**, departments that work on housing issues are the following:

**Housing & Community Development Services (HCDS)** serves as one of six Housing Authorities for the county. A Housing Authority is responsible for the management and operation of its local public housing program, including the federally funded Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. The HCDS program

currently serves over 5,981 older adults. In addition to managing Section 8 and other housing programs, HCDS provides funds for affordable housing development, maintains a housing resources directory, and provides a home repair program.

**Behavioral Health Services (BHS)** provides affordable permanent supportive housing for people with Serious Mental Illness, including services and housing specifically for older adults.

**Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities** includes the **Office of Homeless Solutions (HSEC-OHS)**, which provides outreach and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness. HSEC-OHS also provides the Home Safe housing navigation program for older adults experiencing chronic homelessness.

**Aging & Independence Services (AIS)** provides the Home Safe program for clients of Adult



Protective Services who are at risk of homelessness. AIS also provides assistance to help older adults and caregivers make minor home modifications to help them age in place safely. Additionally, AIS coordinates the community Age Well Housing Team, which is comprised of representatives from PDS and HHSA as well as community agencies and stakeholders. This committee serves as a forum to educate its members about the wide spectrum of housing issues, from increasing the housing supply, to encouraging age friendly housing design, to supporting older adults experiencing housing insecurity.

**Accomplishment Highlights:**

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, several programs and services have addressed the housing crisis head on by focusing on homelessness prevention and intervention, supportive services, new affordable housing, home repair for aging in place, and more.

***Incentivizing Affordable Housing Development***

Incentives to builders can help increase the supply of affordable housing stock. This past fiscal year, PDS developed five new potential program options to incentivize the

***Age Well Housing Team Explores Housing Options***

AIS coordinates the Age Well Housing Team. The team is made up of County staff from HHSA and PDS, other regional housing organization representatives, service providers, and community members. Team meetings feature presentations from local housing partners about new programs, resources, or services available to support older adults throughout San Diego County. In November 2023, the team hosted an introduction to ADUs workshop with guest speakers from AARP, County PDS, and the San Diego Housing Commission. To add a festive flair to the workshop, participants constructed gingerbread houses while they learned the ins and outs of ADUs and how this type of housing can play a role in increasing the local stock of affordable housing.



development of new older adult housing in unincorporated areas of the county. These options include:

- (1) Create an overlay zone in areas of the unincorporated County that are suitable for senior housing, and

***HCDS New Affordable Housing for Older Adults***

The County continues to pursue affordable senior housing developments on excess County-owned property and through incentives for developers. Eight of eleven sites designated as excess County land have been slated for senior affordable housing, and a total of 1,133 units of affordable senior housing will be constructed across the eight projects. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, Levant Senior Cottages, the first affordable senior housing development on excess County land was completed. The development includes 127 units. Construction also began on the following affordable senior housing projects (with the Kettner Crossing and Messina properties being built on excess County land and La Sabila and Santa Fe Senior Village utilizing County funding for developers):



**Kettner Crossing (64 units)**  
1590 Kettner Blvd  
San Diego, CA 92101



**La Sabila (85 units)**  
2357 S. Santa Fe Ave.  
Vista, CA 92083



**Messina (79 units)**  
5525 Mt. Etna Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92117



**Santa Fe Senior Village (54 units)**  
414-428 N. Santa Fe Ave.  
Vista, CA 92083

provide incentivizes and streamlining for senior housing projects within the zone.

- (2) Expand on the State Density Bonus law and give additional bonuses and incentives for developments that provide housing for older adults, and encourage housing developers to build more housing for older adults.
- (3) Create a Density Bonus program for housing developments that provide Universally Designed housing. Universally designed housing is designed and built to be fully functional for all persons in all stages of life, regardless of ability or mobility, and allows residents to age in place.
- (4) Create a Density Bonus program for housing developments that provide housing that meets Visibility standards. To meet Visibility standards, a unit must have an entrance with no steps, doors with 32 inches of clear passage, and one wheelchair-accessible bathroom. These allow residents to adjust to changes in mobility and allow for visitors with disabilities.
- (5) Support senior housing on County-owned land and improve the process by which it is used for affordable housing by identifying possible sites faster and more frequently. By reducing the cost of land for housing projects, this will help address the need for more affordable housing, including housing for older adults.

PDS staff have been collecting public input and feedback on these draft program options and

will present the findings to the Board during Fiscal Year 2024-25 for further direction on which options to implement.

### ***Homelessness Prevention and Intervention***

*Support and Housing Navigation:* The Home Safe Program, a state program funded by the California Department of Social Services, identifies APS clients at risk of homelessness and connects them with housing navigation services. Through a partnership with the HSEC-OHS and Interfaith Community Services, the program provides case management, social services support and housing navigation. Specialized supports include flexible funding for expenses like housing deposits and coordination to secure safe housing. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, 581 older and dependent adults who were homeless or at risk of homelessness were served.



*Personal Care in Transitional Housing:* Some older adults experiencing housing insecurity need assistance with their activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing and dressing. IHSS (state program operated by AIS) may be used in some of these situations. IHSS is designed for care to be provided in a traditional home setting and it also uses a consumer-directed





program model, in which the recipient (or their authorized representative), directs their own care, i.e., hires, trains, and oversees their caregiver. There can be barriers using the standard IHSS model in non-traditional homes and in cases in which the care recipient is not able to direct their own care. AIS and Serving Seniors, a local non-profit organization, collaborated on a pilot project to develop processes for application and provision of IHSS services at the Seniors Landing Bridge Shelter, a 33-room non-congregate transitional housing facility. As of June 2024, the pilot has successfully created the processes and several shelter residents have been authorized to receive IHSS.

***Full-Service Partnership Programs for Residents with Serious Mental Illness***

Residents living with Serious Mental Illness are more likely to retain their housing and have other needs met if supportive social services are provided. Full-Service Partnership Programs are provided by BHS for older adult residents living with Serious Mental Illness in affordable housing communities. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, BHS provided permanent supportive housing for residents of 183 units across 10 older adult designated developments throughout the county. These developments work with Telecare and Community Research

Foundation to provide case management, transportation, and psychiatric care, among other services.

***Assistance for Residents with Serious Mental Illness***

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the County funded 289 slots to provide the Augmented Services Program (ASP) for individuals with Serious Mental Illness who live in Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs) and Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs). This represents an increase of 64 ASP slots over the previous fiscal year RCFEs are non-medical facilities that provide room, meals, housekeeping, supervision, storage and distribution of medication, and personal care assistance for people who need assistance, but who do not need 24-hour nursing care. ARFs are similar to RCFEs and serve adults aged 18-59 who need non-medical care due to physical disability, developmental disability, or serious mental illness. ASP provides case management services such as transportation to medical appointments, money management, individualized support focusing on interpersonal relationships, and more. These services support individuals living with Serious Mental Illness to successfully live in RCFE and ARF community settings.



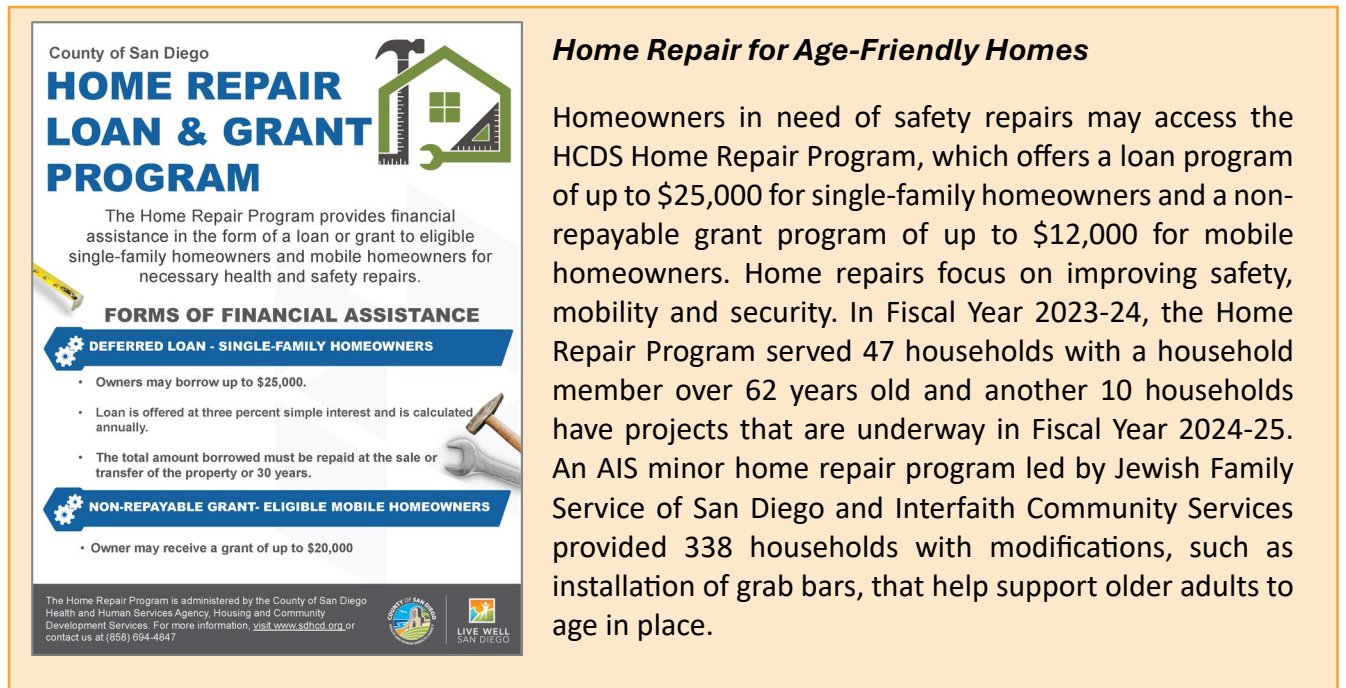
### **Pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program and Rental Support**

In response to stakeholder input, the Shallow Rental Subsidy Program (SRSP) was created as a pilot program. Administered by HSEC-OHS the SRSP provides a monthly rental subsidy of \$500 paid directly to recipients' landlords for up to 18 months. To be eligible, the head of household (applicant) must be 55 years old or older, the household income may not exceed 50% of the area median income, and the applicant must be severely rent burdened (paying more than 50% of the whole household income towards housing costs). SRSP included two rounds of funding in Fiscal Year 2023-24: 214 participants enrolled in the program and received rental subsidy in Round 1; and 81 participants enrolled in the program and received rental subsidy in Round 2. Participants receive case management assistance in addition to the rental subsidies. At the end of the 18-month pilot period, the

program's effectiveness at reducing housing insecurity will be evaluated.

### **Aging 201 Training**

Building on the success of the "Aging 101" training provided in the previous fiscal year, AIS continued its partnership with Serving Seniors and the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness in Fiscal Year 2023-24 to develop and launch the "Aging 201: Training for Homeless Service Providers" curriculum. The training provides organizations with additional information and tools to support their work with older adults experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness. In addition to providing a wide variety of resources, it also includes guidance on how to assess needs, navigate difficult conversations such as managing incontinence, and better serve older adults seeking shelter services or experiencing homelessness. The training is available through the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness.



The flyer is titled "HOME REPAIR LOAN & GRANT PROGRAM" and features a graphic of a house with a hammer and wrench. It describes the program's purpose: "The Home Repair Program provides financial assistance in the form of a loan or grant to eligible single-family homeowners and mobile homeowners for necessary health and safety repairs." It lists two forms of assistance: "DEFERRED LOAN - SINGLE-FAMILY HOMEOWNERS" and "NON-REPAYABLE GRANT - ELIGIBLE MOBILE HOMEOWNERS". The loan program allows homeowners to borrow up to \$25,000 at a 3% simple interest rate, to be repaid at sale or 30 years. The grant program provides up to \$12,000 for mobile homeowners. The flyer also includes contact information for the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and the "LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO" logo.

### **Home Repair for Age-Friendly Homes**

Homeowners in need of safety repairs may access the HCDS Home Repair Program, which offers a loan program of up to \$25,000 for single-family homeowners and a non-repayable grant program of up to \$12,000 for mobile homeowners. Home repairs focus on improving safety, mobility and security. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Home Repair Program served 47 households with a household member over 62 years old and another 10 households have projects that are underway in Fiscal Year 2024-25. An AIS minor home repair program led by Jewish Family Service of San Diego and Interfaith Community Services provided 338 households with modifications, such as installation of grab bars, that help support older adults to age in place.

## NEXT STEPS

Housing affordability is one of the most pressing concerns of older adults in the region according to the Fall 2023 community engagement process and needs assessment. Affordability is an enduring and escalating concern, as is the increase in older adult homelessness.

*More affordable housing stock and supportive housing:* Many County programs for Fiscal Year 2024-25 remain focused on creating more affordable housing and facilitating its development. Four HCDS affordable housing developments with 270 units for older adults are anticipated to break ground in Fiscal Year 2024-25 in Downtown San Diego, Clairemont, and Fallbrook. BHS anticipates that four new developments will provide permanent supportive housing to 65 older adults, and that ASP will expand services to additional older adults to support them to live in residential care facilities. In addition, PDS will be working on a new approach to incentivize the development of affordable housing for older adults.

*Rent aid:* HCDS, along with other local Housing Authorities, will continue to administer the Section 8 Voucher program to ease the cost of housing for thousands of local individuals and families. The HSEC-OHS Shallow Rental Subsidy Program will continue to serve up to 380 rent burdened senior households with a monthly \$500 subsidy for 18 months.

*Other support:* Other important initiatives and programs will also continue, such as the HCDS Home Repair Program, and AIS Minor Home Repair Program. Home Safe has received dedicated funding to serve APS clients through June 2025. Also, the County will implement a pilot “Home Share” program via a contracted provider.

*Age-friendly Training:* AIS and partners will continue deliver tailored trainings to provide organizations with additional information and tools to support their work with older adults experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.

## Learn More

Want to learn more about housing initiatives and resources? Explore County departments and partner information.

- County HCDS website: [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/sdhcd.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/sdhcd.html)
- County PDS website: [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds.html)
- Regional Taskforce on Homelessness website: [www.rfhdsd.org](http://www.rfhdsd.org)
- Age Well Housing Team website: [www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/housing](http://www.livewellsd.org/i-want-to/learn-more/aging/age-well-san-diego/housing)



# SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

1,979 residents participated in 50 intergenerational activities coordinated by AIS in partnership with County Department of Parks and Recreation and other community organizations in Fiscal Year 2023-24.

### Vision:

Older adults have access to a range of social and community engagement opportunities that promote active living, reduce isolation, and provide enriching experiences with others across age groups and generations.

### Current Landscape:

Senior and community centers, libraries, service clubs, educational organizations, and meetup groups are just a sample of the many options for social activities for older adults in the San Diego region. For those who are homebound or frail, there are a variety of telephone check-in programs and an increasing number of virtual options such as online classes, social groups, and more. However, not all older adults have equal access. Limited awareness, transportation, language, health challenges, and other barriers make social connection difficult for some. Additionally, not everyone can navigate technology due to limited digital literacy or lack of access to technology. It's critical to remove these barriers to social participation and connection.

Older adults' health can benefit from a sense of connection and belonging. Similarly, research suggests that social isolation and loneliness are associated with an increased risk of dementia, heart disease, depression, and even premature death. Since some may not realize the importance of social programs and services for older adults, it is important to educate our communities on these programs' value as a key way to address a critical public health issue.

The AIS Outreach & Education staff share information with older adults about social engagement opportunities, as well as information about transportation options to access the activities. The Age Well Social Participation & Inclusion Team is convened by AIS and is comprised of a variety of senior service providers including researchers, senior and community centers, and other organizations that reach isolated older adults. This team shares best practices and creates educational resources about ways to engage in the community and why doing so is important. One of these resources is the “Get Connected” guide which is available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.



CDA has made technology access a key priority over the past several years, allocating

substantial funding to these efforts and partnering with local Area Agencies on Aging, such as AIS, to implement programming on a local level. Another way to stay engaged is through intergenerational activities. As one of the few public agencies with an Intergenerational Coordinator position, AIS and other County departments host intergenerational programs, events, and volunteer opportunities to help older adults stay connected. The AIS Intergenerational Coordinator also provides technical assistance to organizations on how to implement intergenerational programs and assists with developing new engagement opportunities.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

Social Participation efforts in Fiscal Year 2023-24 focused on increasing digital inclusion and intergenerational participation and programs.

#### *Intergenerational Engagement*

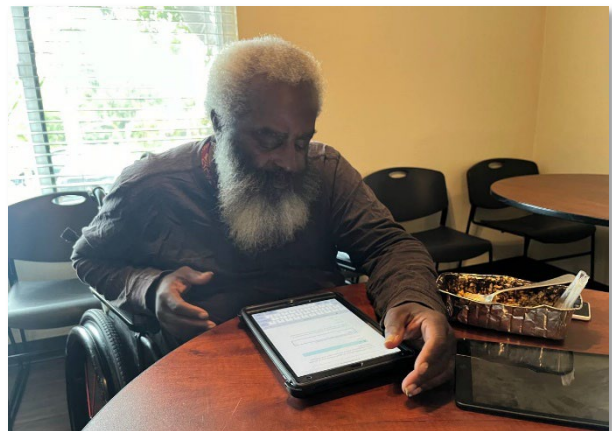
Through temporary funding provided by CDA, AIS in partnership with the County Department of Parks and Recreation and other community partners hosted 50 different intergenerational activities for over 1,979 people in Fiscal Year 2023-24. A wide range of activities and events included pickleball, cooking classes, animal encounters, paint classes, a multi-cultural fair, a Halloween Festival, a Valentine’s Day Party, and Spring Festival. Also as part of this initiative, there are now nine Intergenerational Gardens in development throughout the region which will provide opportunities for older adult volunteers and children to connect and learn about gardening. These programs are supported by the CDA’s Older Adults Recovery and Resilience funding.



More than 11 community organizations received 43 instances of technical assistance consultation from the AIS Intergenerational Coordinator. Guidance provided included education on how to develop a curriculum, assess community needs, and recruit participants. For example, as a result of this guidance, the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Early Childhood Education Center hosted an event in Summer 2023 in which older adults read books to preschool children.

**Digital Inclusion Programs**

Older adults gained access to technology and improved their digital literacy skills through the AIS Digital Inclusion Program. Three hundred forty-eight (348) older adults received a tablet device and training in Fiscal Year 2023-24. Staff also connected participants to resources for low or no-cost broadband internet. This effort began in 2022 when CDA provided AIS with tablets through a pilot project. Additional CDA temporary funding allowed AIS to expand the program. Since the program’s inception, more than 510 participants have been served. Another program, IHSS Tech2Connect, provides similar services to eligible IHSS recipients and caregivers. It is described more fully in the Health & Community Support section.



## NEXT STEPS

Expressed by residents during community input sessions in Fall 2023, social isolation is a serious concern among older adults. Those who live alone, are caregivers, or who lack access to transportation or technology are among those at greatest risk. AIS, the County Department of Parks and Recreation, and other community partners will continue to work together to provide intergenerational engagement opportunities. Older adults will receive services through the Digital Inclusion program as it enters its last year. The Age Well Social Participation and Inclusion Team will host a pilot “Train the Trainer” workshop. This workshop will be designed to educate social services staff, healthcare providers, older adults, and caregivers about the negative impact of social isolation and loneliness. The trainers will provide strategies to address these issues and will share opportunities for social connection and engagement.

## Learn More

Access the *Get Connected* guide in multiple languages at the Age Well Social Participation & Inclusion website.

Visit [www.livewellsd.org/agewell](http://www.livewellsd.org/agewell) and click on “Social Participation.”





# TRANSPORTATION



## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

310 riders received 19,104 one-way trips totaling 110,479 miles, provided by the San Diego County No-Cost Transportation Program.

### **Vision:**

Older adults have access to safe and affordable transportation options that are accessible for all ages and abilities.

### **Current Landscape:**

Safe, affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation options are foundational to older adults' ability to be independent, access needed services, stay socially engaged, and sustain connections to community life. Nearly three-quarters of older adults who responded to the CASOA needs assessment survey gave excellent or good ratings for the ease at which they can get to places they usually have to visit. This leaves an estimated quarter of respondents facing significant transportation challenges at least some of the time. Individuals who no longer drive, have fewer economic resources, or who live in rural areas face the greatest transportation challenges.

Metropolitan Transit System (serving the central, eastern, and southern portions of the county) and the North County Transit District are the region's public transportation providers with light rail, bus, and paratransit services.

Public transit services that run frequently and connect to a variety of routes are generally accessible to residents who live in urban and some suburban communities. However, minimal access to public transportation is typical for those living in rural and some suburban communities. Other transportation options for older adults include private driving services, which include rideshare operators



like Uber and Lyft, and non-profit transportation services. For example, organizations such as Jewish Family Service of San Diego and ElderHelp of San Diego provide volunteer-based ride programs for older adults in need of transportation assistance.

Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation (FACT) is one of several organizations that provide transportation information to help older adults and others learn about available options. FACT is designated by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) as our region's Consolidated Transportation Services Agency, and it offers a variety of services, such as telephone and web referrals to transportation providers and assistance scheduling low-cost rides. In addition, SANDAG offers 511 San Diego, which is a free phone and web service that provides up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions; schedule, route, and fare information for public transportation; carpool and vanpool referrals; bicycling information; and more. 211 San Diego is another helpful resource that informs residents in need of transportation about public transit options, senior ride programs, paratransit programs, and specialized transit information providers.



Not all older adults know how to access available transportation options or know of a trusted information source to assist them with their questions. The Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team shares information about transportation options and collaborates with community partners to support transportation initiatives and increase older adults' mobility independence. The *Ride Well to Age Well Guide* is a resource updated annually by this team to provide regional transportation information and options specific to older adults.

AIS provides outreach regarding these available transportation options and resources through community events and presentations. AIS is also currently administering a transportation program with funding from the federal ARPA.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, transportation advances included the implementation of no-cost transportation services program, updates to an older adult transportation guide, and a grassroots community project that made improvements to their neighborhood.

#### ***San Diego County No-Cost Transportation Program for Older Adults***

The San Diego County No-Cost Transportation Program for Older Adults provides up to 100 miles of transportation per month to eligible older adults who reside in one of the 39 Health Equity Zip Codes as well as other areas that are in lowest quartile of California's Healthy Places Index. Operated by Jewish Family Service of San Diego through their On the Go program, this short-term AIS program (ARPA-funded) assists older adults with free rides to retain their mobility independence and stay

connected to community life. The service allows eligible participants to request a ride online or by calling a live agent. It connects riders to a variety of activities they may struggle to access due to costs and limited options, such as medical appointments, errands, and social activities. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the program enrolled 310 older adults and provided 19,104 one-way trips totaling 110,479 miles of rides. The program

was a recipient of a 2024 USAgings Aging Achievement Award. USAgings represents and supports the national network of more than 600 Area Agencies on Aging.

***CalFresh Healthy Living – Policy, Systems, and Environment Community Change Projects***

The CalFresh Healthy Living (also known as “SNAP-Ed”) program is dedicated to

***Community Change Project:  
Intergenerational Walk Audit Leads to  
Sidewalk Repairs and Bus Bench Installation***

The CalFresh Healthy Living class at Villa Alta apartments in the Colina del Sol neighborhood of San Diego partnered with UrbanLife, a neighboring youth organization, to conduct a walk audit of the streets surrounding their neighborhood. Supporting one another, the older adults and youth used their mobile devices to take pictures of sidewalk issues and submit the issues to the City of San Diego via the City’s Get it Done application. As a result, four sidewalk repairs have been made, making the streets more walkable.

In addition, many residents voiced how the lack of a bus bench and shade at the nearby bus stop discouraged them from using the busses. With support from one another, they decided to call the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System to express their group’s concern. Within a few weeks, a bench was installed. The installation of a shade structure was also considered but not possible due to the limited space on the sidewalk.



empowering communities to make healthy choices in everyday activities. Through the program, AIS staff facilitate as participants work together to select and implement policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) community change projects. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, older adults in the Villa Alta CalFresh Healthy Living class engaged in a neighborhood walk audit as part of their community change project. This group was proud to secure positive changes for their community that make it safer to walk and more likely for older adults to use the bus. (See the “Community Change Project” box for more details.)

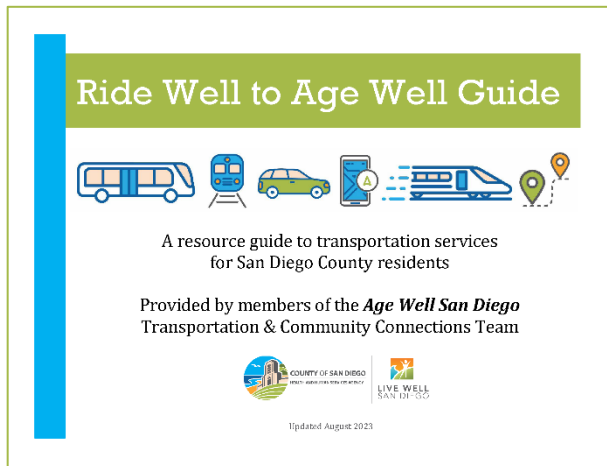
**Complete Streets Toolkit**

In 2024, the Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team finalized the *Complete Streets Toolkit for Older Adults* and created a PowerPoint presentation to go along with it. The toolkit provides engaged residents, city and regional planners, designers, and policy makers with new ideas, strategies, and innovations on how they can improve their streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces for everyone who lives there. The focus on older adults in community design also supports the needs of other community members who experience mobility conditions and challenges. The toolkit has already been used by the Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team members and County land

use planners to educate residents and professionals on these design strategies.

**Ride Well to Age Well Guide**

In Fall 2023, the Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team updated the *Ride Well to Age Well Guide* to include new service information and to translate it from English into nine languages. The guide describes detailed transportation options for each region of the county, including public, private, and non-profit services. It also explains how to download and use mobile applications such as Lyft and provides a glossary of common transportation terms.



**Learn More**

To access the *Ride Well to Age Well Guide*, visit [www.livewellsd.org/agewell](http://www.livewellsd.org/agewell) and click on “Transportation.”

**NEXT STEPS**

The No-Cost Transportation Program for Older Adults will continue into 2025. The Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team will continue to promote the *Ride Well to Age Well Guide* and use the *Complete Streets Toolkit for Older Adults* to educate residents. The team will also explore ways to support organizations that host events for older adults, with the goal for these organizations to provide specific transportation information so that the events are more accessible to those who do not drive.



# DEMENTIA



## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

In FY 2023-24, 817 healthcare providers received training on the use of the Physician Guidelines, bringing the total number of providers trained since the inception of the Alzheimer's Project to more than 4,000.

## **Vision:**

San Diegans have the information they need to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD); residents with ADRD receive the highest standard of clinical care; individuals with ADRD are well cared for and supported by "Dementia-Friendly" communities to be as independent as possible; and family members have the support they need to care for their loved ones.

## **Current Landscape:**

County epidemiologists determined that ADRD was the fourth leading cause of death in 2022 among San Diego County residents aged 60 and over. It is projected that more than 98,600 residents over the age of 55 are living with ADRD. The prevalence of ADRD in San Diego is expected to reach 115,000 by 2030. Loved ones providing care to people living with ADRD are also greatly impacted. County epidemiologists estimate that there are 290,000 residents caring for someone with ADRD.

In 2014, the Board launched The Alzheimer's Project, in which County staff bring together key stakeholders across our region to address ADRD from multiple angles.

Primary care physicians are on the frontlines of dementia care due to a shortage of geriatricians, neurologists, and other specialists. Prior to the Alzheimer's Project, physicians in San Diego County noted that there was minimal guidance for non-specialists on how to effectively screen, evaluate, and manage the diseases that cause dementia (i.e.,

Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and more). Early detection can allow impacted patients to get treatment and give patients and their loved ones time to get resources in place and make plans to ensure a higher quality of life for as long as possible.

In Fall 2023, as part of a round of community input for the Aging Roadmap, a special feedback forum was hosted with Jewish Family Service program clients, including a listening session with caregivers of people living with ADRD, and a separate session with individuals living with early-stage ADRD, giving voice to this population that is often not heard in traditional community input events. The input gathered in the sessions indicated that caregivers value education programs on ADRD issues, the emotional support of groups, and they especially value respite care to take breaks from caregiving. The individuals living with ADRD emphasized that they want to stay engaged in life activities to the extent possible, they don’t want to feel isolated, and they want to maintain ties and interactions with supportive people.

A supportive, inclusive community with dementia-friendly residents and organizations has the potential to greatly improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their families.

Several community teams convened by or on behalf of the County advance the work of The Alzheimer’s Project. The Alzheimer’s Project Clinical Roundtable convenes medical specialists and primary care physicians to advance ADRD care in our region. AIS contracts with Champions for Health, the foundation arm of the San Diego County Medical Society, to coordinate this group. The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team, coordinated



by AIS, focuses on sharing best practices with the broad community. The Caregiver Coalition of San Diego (coordinated by AIS) provides education to family caregivers, including those caring for people living with dementia.

The goals of The Alzheimer’s Project have been supported by County funding as well as grants to the County and to project partners. Indeed, one of the successes of The Alzheimer’s Project has been in leveraging our local collaborative work to bring in over \$19 million dollars in external funding to the County, to UCSD, and to other community partners.

Ten years after the launch of The Alzheimer’s Project, there has been incredible progress. This section describes accomplishment highlights from Fiscal Year 2023–24 and notable cumulative impacts since project inception. More extensive information is available in the annual Alzheimer’s Project Report, which can be found in Appendix B of this document.



Clinical Roundtable physicians published two articles in the past year in the San Diego Physician Magazine, which reaches 11,600 subscribers. The February 2024 article by Michael Lobatz, MD covered the new disease modifying medications, and a March 2024 cover article by Lindsey Yourman, MD and Ian Neel, MD discussed the steps that providers can take in care planning.

### **System Adoption**

It is widely recognized that two important ways to achieve sustainability of best clinical practices are to structure the payment systems in a way that aligns with these best practices, and to support the practices via features in the Electronic Medical Record systems that the clinicians use. As discussed in last year's Aging Roadmap report, several health systems have made progress on changing their Electronic Medical Record systems to include some of these features. With funding from UCSD Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion, UCSD Health's Family Medicine Department continued its evaluation of the *Guidelines* protocols. Preliminary results showed that many provider practices changed after six months of receiving the training and using the tools. For example, the proportion of patients who were eligible for screening and were actually screened increased from 21% at baseline to 53% after six months. This is rather meaningful, since 10% or more of the patients who were screened had positive results, i.e., signs of cognitive impairment.

Through AIS' contracted services via Southern Caregiver Resource Center and through the efforts of the Caregiver Coalition, more than 3,000 caregivers were provided services in the last year, with approximately half of these individuals caring for a person with ADRD. As

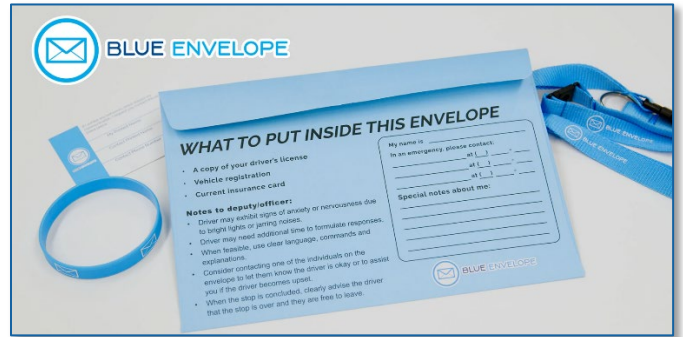
part of these services, approximately 5,980 hours of respite were provided to caregivers caring for someone living with dementia. The Caregiver Coalition's offerings included a resource fair and conference entitled "Creating a Game Plan: Strategies for Managing Dementia." Topics included navigating long-term care options, preparing legal documents and insurance plans, and driving safety. The Caregiver Coalition also produced eight webinars which are available for on-demand viewing via the Caregiver Coalition YouTube Channel (@caregivercoalitionsd) accessible from [www.CaregiverCoalitionSD.org](http://www.CaregiverCoalitionSD.org). The on-demand webinars can be especially helpful for caregivers who would have limited time to leave their home. Topics in the last year included planning ahead for end-of-life final arrangements, signs of elder abuse, and mental health.

In 2017, as part of The Alzheimer's Project and with community stakeholder input, AIS launched the Alzheimer's Response Team (ART), a social work case management program. ART serves as a lifeline for caregivers and families needing support for their loved one with ADRD. ART services include assessment of needs, coordination of services, client and family education, and advance care planning regarding legal, financial and care issues. In FY 2023-24, ART served 872 clients.

### **Public Awareness and Education**

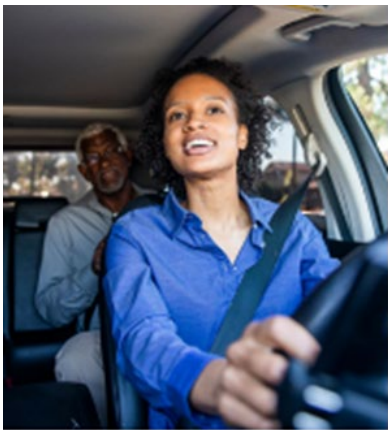
AIS continues to serve as the regional lead for Dementia Friends, a 1-hour, interactive session that aims to change the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. In partnership with the Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team, AIS provided Dementia Friends sessions to 378 older adults and senior service professionals.

The team has created a variety of educational and supportive materials, such as the Dementia Friendly Activities Toolkit and a Communication Tip Card. These were translated into additional languages, making these resources available in all county threshold languages. The team also created new brochures to educate organizations on how their sector can be dementia friendly, focusing on three new sectors: restaurants and other food establishments, transportation providers, and legal professionals. These brochures can be accessed at [www.livewellsd.org/dementiafriendly](http://www.livewellsd.org/dementiafriendly) along with the previously published brochures and other resources.



**Blue Envelope Program**

In September 2023, the Board declared the region a “Blue Envelope County” and launched the Blue Envelope Program (1). It is led by the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department in collaboration with community organizations, the San Diego County Chiefs’ and Sherriff’s Association. The program is designed to promote inclusivity and serve as an enhanced



**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Transportation Providers**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 339-4461

**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Restaurants and Food Establishments**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 339-4461

**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Legal Professionals**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 339-4461







communication awareness tool between law enforcement and community members with dementia, autism, or other conditions that might require additional accommodations or awareness during a law enforcement interaction. The program allows an individual to display the Blue Envelope logo or present a Blue Envelope upon contact with law enforcement or other community service personnel. The Blue Envelope materials can contain identification and other helpful information. HHSA and other community partners all contribute to disseminating this resource.

### ***Take on Alzheimer's Campaign***

In June 2024, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and AIS hosted one of CDPH's three kick-off events for Take on Alzheimer's, a statewide campaign to raise awareness regarding brain health, signs of Alzheimer's, and the importance of getting screened. The event was hosted in partnership with and held at the Fourth District Seniors Resource Center in Southeastern San Diego. It featured leaders in the field of public health, healthcare, and social services to share resources and discuss health disparities and strategies for San Diego County's multicultural communities facing Alzheimer's. Over 60 older adults, professionals, and community partners attended the event.

## NEXT STEPS

Champions for Health will continue to coordinate the work of the Clinical Roundtable in building a more dementia-capable workforce by strengthening the knowledge, skills, and abilities of health care professionals who deliver care and services to people with ADRD and their caregivers.

In partnership with the County, Champions for Health will identify and work with two more health systems to integrate dementia screening tools and related clinical practice tools into their Electronic Medical Record systems.

The Caregiver Coalition is continuing to plan insightful programming, including a focus on dementia. Efforts are being made to ensure all of these resources are accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and delivered through multiple channels to best reach caregivers of diverse backgrounds.

The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team is developing a training on dementia-friendly best practices for transportation providers. This training will be provided to the region's primary stakeholders in the transportation industry at the Council on Access and Mobility general meeting in October 2024. The team is developing another training designed specifically for banks and financial institutions and has garnered the commitment of a local credit union to prioritize this training for all staff.

San Diego's Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program received notice of extended funding in June 2024, which will allow UCSD, the County, and other funded organizations to continue educating local healthcare providers, social service agencies, and community organizations on ADRD and best practices.

County epidemiologists are analyzing regional data to develop updated prevalence estimates on ADRD and caregiver burden. This information will be shared with the public in a report in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

## Learn More

Want to learn more about dementia resources? Explore County projects and partner information.

- The Alzheimer’s Project website: [www.sdalzheimersproject.org](http://www.sdalzheimersproject.org)
- Champions for Health website: [www.championsforhealth.org](http://www.championsforhealth.org)
- Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team website: [www.livewellsd.org/dementiafriendly](http://www.livewellsd.org/dementiafriendly)
- Take On Alz Campaign: [www.takeonalz.com](http://www.takeonalz.com)
- Healthy Brain Initiative: [www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDCB/Pages/CA-Healthy-Brain-Initiative-RFA.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/CDCB/Pages/CA-Healthy-Brain-Initiative-RFA.aspx)
- Caregiver Coalition of San Diego: [www.caregivercoalitionsd.org](http://www.caregivercoalitionsd.org)

The screenshot shows the website for 'THE ALZHEIMER'S Project' with the tagline 'San Diego unites for a cure and care'. The navigation menu includes ABOUT, FOCUS AREAS, NEWS & EVENTS, PARTNERS, RESOURCES, and NEED HELP?. The main content area features a photograph of a hospital room with a patient bed and a chair. To the right of the photo is a headline: 'First in the Nation: All San Diego Emergency Departments Now Accredited For Geriatric Emergency Care'. Below the headline is a circular accreditation badge from the American College of Emergency Physicians, labeled 'ACCREDITED GERIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT'. A search bar and a 'GO' button are located at the top right of the website interface.

[Learn more about the initiative here.](#)

The devastating impact of Alzheimer’s disease is expected to escalate as the region’s elderly population surges. In 2014 the San Diego County Board of Supervisors established The Alzheimer’s Project, an unprecedented regional initiative to address the toll of the disease on families, communities and our health care systems.



# CAREGIVER SUPPORT



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

The *Caregiver Handbook* is now published in nine threshold languages and is accessible to more people in San Diego County.

### Vision:

Caregivers have access to the supports and resources necessary to provide responsive and quality care to older adults, while also tending to their own wellbeing.

### Current Landscape:

Training, assistance, and relief are critical needs for the 490,000 residents who are estimated by County epidemiologists to care for a family member or loved one throughout our region. While providing care for a spouse, parent, friend, or other loved one can be rewarding, it can also be very challenging. Some caregivers have given up other important activities in their life or have stopped paid work in order to care for their person. What may be a labor of love can become very draining, especially over an extended period. Caregivers often have needs for emotional support, training on how to do some of their tasks, information on what resources exist for their loved one, and often, they desperately need a break. HHSA provides eligible families and caregivers a variety of programs to support these needs. AIS oversees the federal Older Americans Act-funded Title III-E Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP). FCSP services are delivered through contracted organizations that provide education, caregiver counseling, case management, support groups, legal aid, minor home modification, and respite care. BHS provides, via a contracted provider, an evidence-based program for caregiver mental health called "REACH" that focuses on the needs of Hispanic caregivers.

Additionally, some local non-profit organizations provide caregiver education, support groups, and respite programs through other funding sources.

The Caregiver Coalition of San Diego, coordinated by AIS is a committed group of senior service providers and volunteers. The Coalition works to identify and address the needs of caregivers through education, support, and advocacy, and it has developed the *Caregiver Handbook* as a comprehensive information source. The Coalition also regularly provides workshops and webinars, many of which are archived on a YouTube channel for public access.



Grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship family caregivers are often unexpectedly in their position of raising a relative's children. Like other family caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren have a variety of needs to help in their role and to help them maintain their own wellbeing while in that role. HHS provides a variety of services for them, including respite care, funds for emergency needs, kinship family enrichment events, and educational resources. Facilitated by HHS, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Workgroup is a collaboration of service providers who are dedicated to connecting relative caregivers to resources in their communities. The Workgroup created the *Handbook for Grandparents and Other*

*Relatives Raising Children*, which serves as a comprehensive information source.

As a contractor for AIS and BHS caregiver support services, Southern Caregiver Resource Center (SCRC) is the largest provider of caregiver services in our region. SCRC provides respite care, information and referrals, care coordination, counseling, support groups, training classes, and community education.

Family caregivers calling SCRC seeking immediate information and assistance are invited to speak with SCRC's Intake Coordinators. Intake Coordinators help family caregivers discover existing services in their community that can make caregiving easier. They can also help family caregivers identify potential community services for the older adult they are caring for. A family caregiver can receive a comprehensive assessment of their situation and needs by an SCRC Family Consultant, who can create a Caregiver Action Plan and follow up with additional resources and where to find more information.

SCRC staff includes specially trained Promotoras (Community Health Workers) to provide outreach throughout San Diego County, especially in traditionally under-resourced, hard to reach, ethnic and/or minority communities. Promotoras create awareness, disseminate information, and educate families and the community about SCRC programs, as well as other community caregiver support services. They provide community resources in a culturally and linguistically competent manner. The use of Promotoras is a "best practice" strategy to

reach ethnically diverse and hard to reach populations.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

Caregiver Support accomplishments include providing education to caregivers, connecting them to resources, providing programs for mental wellness, supporting kinship families, and providing respite care.

### Family Caregiver Support Program

SCRC provided a variety of services to caregivers in San Diego County through the AIS FCSP. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, SCRC provided over 3,000 family caregivers with information and assistance to increase awareness regarding existing services in the community that can make caregiving easier. SCRC provided 662 training workshops to assist family caregivers in developing their caregiving skills and knowledge.

SCRC also conducted 466 1-on-1 family caregiver assessments by one of their Family Consultants to assess needs, create a Caregiver Action Plan, and follow up with additional resources and guidance on where to find more information. SCRC also provided case management services to 1,341 family caregivers to cope and manage their needs, as well as the needs of the care recipient, by setting up essential services.

To support caregiver mental health, the SCRC team facilitated support groups attended by during which 127 family caregivers had the opportunity to meet each other to share experiences, get ideas for caregiving, and receive social support to ease the stress of their caregiving role. Ninety-six (96) caregivers received counseling support to reduce stress and manage symptoms of

depression and loss that were a result of their caregiving responsibilities and the associated circumstances.

Family caregivers received 11,524 hours of respite care through SCRC to get a break to take care of their own personal needs or to “recharge their batteries” during Fiscal Year 2023-24.

**DO YOU KNOW?**

**Southern Caregiver Resource Center (SCRC)**, founded in 1987, is the leading provider of comprehensive caregiver support services for families caring for frail older adults and adults living with cognitive degenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease and related disorders in San Diego and Imperial Counties. Our services are offered online and in person, in English and in Spanish. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, SCRC is supported through a variety of sources including grants from the California Department of Aging, County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services (AIS), Behavioral Health Services (BHS), private foundations, local businesses and individual donors. To learn how you can support SCRC, please contact us by phone, e-mail, or visit our website. Tax ID 52-0402867

**Southern Caregiver Resource Center**  
Caring for those who care for others.

**Support Services for Family Caregivers**

Our mission is to help families and communities master the challenges of caring for adults with chronic and disabling conditions. The core values that we work by are Support, Empowerment, Accessibility, Collaboration, Compassion, and Knowledge.

**Visit**  
scrc.care

**Click!**  
SCRC CareNav®

**To get connected!**

891 Kuhn Drive, Suite 200  
Chula Vista, CA 91914  
(858) 268-4432  
(800) 827-1008 Toll Free  
(858) 268-7816  
scrc@caregivercenter.org  
www.caregivercenter.org

SCRC1987 SCRCsSanDiego  
Caregiver\_Center SCRCsSanDiego

Do you need assistance caring for someone who is frail and elderly? Are you caring for someone with cognitive decline? Southern Caregiver Resource Center specializes in offering the best support services for caregivers. Our goal is caring for those who care for others.

### Caregiver Coalition

During Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Caregiver Coalition and its member organizations provided eight free webinars and workshops for 134 caregivers on topics including: Parkinson’s Disease, Recognizing Elder Abuse, Alzheimer’s Disease Warning Signs, Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), and more. In November 2023, the Coalition



held the “Creating a Game Plan: Strategies for Managing Dementia” conference with presentations on navigating long-term care options, preparing legal documents, and having difficult conversations. Also in November 2023, the Coalition partnered with the City of San Diego to host an event for National Family Caregiver Awareness Month to provide caregiving resources. Both events included exhibitor tables for partner organizations to connect with participants. Coalition members also participated in 10 community events such as multi-cultural resource fairs.

During Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Coalition increased its outreach efforts to corporations, major employers, and other organizations throughout the county. Presentations focused on educating employers and employees who are family caregivers about coalition resources that are available to employees, including workshops available during lunch hours, after work, and weekends.

The *Caregiver Handbook* was also expanded in two significant ways in Fiscal Year 2023-24. First, the mental health section was updated to include resource listings, including the San Diego Access and Crisis Line and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Second, the Coalition translated the handbook into four additional threshold languages: Chinese - Mandarin, Persian - Farsi, Somali, and Korean. The Coalition distributed 353 print copies of the handbook, in addition to posting the revised copies online.



### Support for Kinship Families

Grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship caregivers had the opportunity to attend three regional symposia in Fiscal Year 2023-24. These events were hosted by HHSA's Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities-Office of Equitable Communities, with support from the Child and Family Well-Being Department and AIS. Over 160 kinship caregivers attended to hear from expert speakers, gather resources, and connect with others living with similar circumstances. The events provided childcare and fun activities for the entire family. In addition, HHSA hosted family enrichment events at the San Diego Zoo and Safari Park to allow families to enjoy a memorable day together. Five hundred seventy kinship caregivers and other accompanying adults attended these enrichment events.

In recognition of the innovative work in this area, the County was one of three jurisdictions in the United States that was chosen in March 2024 to engage in an intensive *Bridging Systems for Kinship Families* initiative, spearheaded by the national Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network. For the next two years, the Network will partner with a team of HHSA staff representatives, community providers, and kinship caregivers to address service barriers, break down silos, and leverage resources to maximize support of all kinship families in our region.

Also in Fiscal Year 2023-24, over 500 copies of the English version of the *Handbook for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children* were distributed while another nearly 500 copies of a Spanish version were distributed.





## NEXT STEPS

Caregiver Coalition of San Diego and County providers will continue to educate older adults and caregivers about existing local resources for family caregivers through online webinars, in-person events, and direct counseling. The Caregiver Coalition will focus on effectively reaching caregivers of diverse ethnic backgrounds by assessing its educational resources and ensuring their accessibility and cultural sensitivity, and delivering them through multiple channels. The Caregiver Coalition will also reach out to representative organizations and major employers to extend their reach to caregivers in need. Efforts will continue to engage with kinship families to host symposia and enrichment events.

## Learn More

- Southern Caregiver Resource Center:  
[www.caregivercenter.org](http://www.caregivercenter.org)
- Caregiver Coalition of San Diego (Including access to the *Caregiver Handbook* and archived webinars):  
[www.caregivercoalitionsd.org](http://www.caregivercoalitionsd.org)
- Resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Other Kinship Caregivers (including access to the *Handbook for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children*): [www.211sandiego.org/grandparents-caregivers](http://www.211sandiego.org/grandparents-caregivers)



# SAFETY



## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

Due to swift cooperation between several local agencies and the FBI, approximately \$1.4 million in funds stolen from older adults were frozen, preventing criminals' access to the funds.

### **Vision:**

Older adults and persons with disabilities are safe in their homes and community.

### **Current Landscape:**

Older adults and persons with disabilities often face threats to their safety at higher levels than other community members. Abuse, scams, and the risk of injury due to falls represent major safety issues. The County provides a variety of supports and services that seek to improve and ensure safety among older adults.

### **Abuse and Scams**

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that nationally, at least 10% of adults aged 65 and older living in a community setting experience elder abuse in any given year. In California, the legal definition of elder abuse is “physical or emotional abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a victim 65 years of age or older” (Penal Code 368 PC). For APS in California, the age of an elder is defined as 60 or older, or 18 to 59 years for a dependent adult. The Elder and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act defines the following types of abuse: physical abuse (which includes sexual abuse), neglect (which includes self-neglect), financial abuse (scams), mental suffering, abandonment, isolation, and abduction (California Welfare & Institutions Code §§15600-15610.70). Though not prosecuted, self-neglect is one of the most commonly investigated concerns. AIS Adult Protective Services (APS) investigated over 20,000 reports of elder abuse in Fiscal Year 2023-24.



Reports of elder abuse and scams continue to rise, yet many cases go unreported. Increasing public awareness regarding the signs of abuse and strengthening prevention and intervention strategies are priorities for the County and community partners.

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office is the entity responsible for prosecuting criminal acts of elder abuse in the region. The DA's Office also engages in elder abuse prevention and training. San Diego County has been recognized for its collaborative approach to tackling elder abuse. The DA's office coordinates the Elder Protection Council, a collaboration of APS, local law enforcement, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Similarly, the Elder Justice Task Force (EJTF) combats the rampant scams and financial abuse impacting older adults. This task force is a joint effort of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the DA's Office, APS, the US Department of Justice, the Law Enforcement Coordination Center, and local law enforcement. In 2022, over 1,700 older adults in San Diego County fell victim to financial scams resulting in over \$49 million lost. In 2023, the loss amount nearly doubled to \$96.7 million. Returning stolen funds to victims and bringing scammers to justice is a key role of the District Attorney's Office in support of EJTF efforts.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program within AIS is responsible for investigating reports of abuse in long-term care facilities. A combination of staff and dedicated certified volunteers support this program. The Public Guardian program within AIS ensures the safety and care of individuals who have been deemed by the court to be unable to care for themselves and their financial assets, and for whom the Public Guardian is named (by the court) as their conservator. Depending on the particular case and type of conservatorship, Public Guardian may be responsible for ensuring a conservatee has proper food, clothing, shelter, and health care, as well as protecting a conservatee's assets.

### Falls

County epidemiologists estimate that each year, over 100,000 older adults in the region experience falls that result in serious injuries. Falls with major injuries can lead to a loss of mobility and independence. However, many falls are preventable, and research has shown that the top methods for preventing falls include physical activity, talking to a healthcare professional to mitigate medication risks, getting vision checked, and improving home safety. AIS coordinates the San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force, a community-based coalition that collaborates on developing resources, awareness campaigns, and programs to reduce falls and their devastating consequences. This task force is comprised of healthcare professionals, senior service providers, and community advocates. In addition, as discussed in the Health & Community Support section, AIS offers evidence-based Tai Chi classes which have been shown to improve balance, strength, and flexibility and decrease the risk of falls. Task Force partner organizations provide other fall

prevention programs, such as A Matter of Balance and Bingocize.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Safety priority area accomplishments focused on older adults living safely in their homes and being protected through public awareness and public safety measures.

### Fall Prevention Outreach and Support

The San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force's Speakers Bureau educated 335 community members on how to prevent falls and referred community members to programs that reduce risk. Over 1,000 older adults participated in County evidence-based fall prevention programs such as Tai Chi.



**DIGNITY AT HOME**  
FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services is providing **FREE** fall prevention kits to qualifying program participants

Each kit will contain a variety of home safety products, assistive devices, and other tools to prevent falls and fall-related injuries and encourage healthy aging.

To qualify for this program, you must:

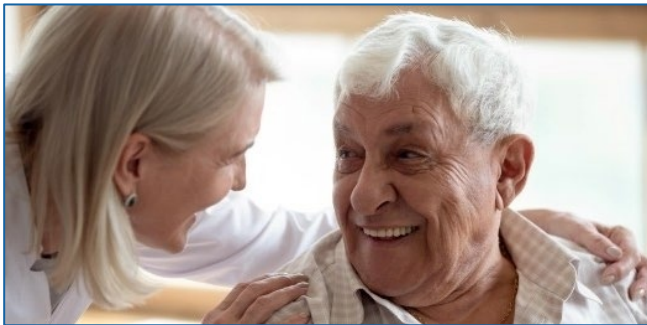
- Be aged 60 and older or a person with a disability of any age
- Be a resident of San Diego County
- Be at risk of falling

TO APPLY, VISIT [BIT.LY/SANDIEGODAH](https://bit.ly/sandiegodah) | QUESTIONS? CALL (858) 496-5500

AGING.SANDIEGOCOUNTY.GOV



The Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program continues to build awareness of common risk factors to help reduce the number of these debilitating falls. Free fall prevention kits, supported by CDA grant funding, provide community members at-risk for falling with a variety of home safety items, including plug-in LED nightlights, a non-slip bathmat, and a digital pill box. Over 320 community members have received a kit since the program’s inception in March 2022.



**Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)**

The LTCOP advocates for residents in long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and other licensed facilities. The program’s purpose is to ensure these residents’ rights, dignity, quality of life, and care. Mandated by the federal government under the Older Americans Act, the program serves residents living in the 1,383 licensed facilities across the region. Certified volunteers and staff identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, the residents. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the LTCOP completed 3,193 facility visits and 39 Ombudsman volunteers donated a total of 2,077 hours.

**Adult Protective Services (APS)**

Expanded APS laws and policy developments, increased public awareness, and an increased older adult population all contributed to recent increases in APS reports and services. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, APS received over 28,000 referrals, with over 20,000 investigations. This is an increase in cases of 15.6% from the last fiscal year.

As part of ongoing partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, APS conducted three 8-hour trainings on elder abuse for over 60 front line law enforcement officers with the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department and police departments from the cities of Oceanside, Carlsbad and Escondido. The training was conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women and was funded by an “Abuse Later in Life” grant.



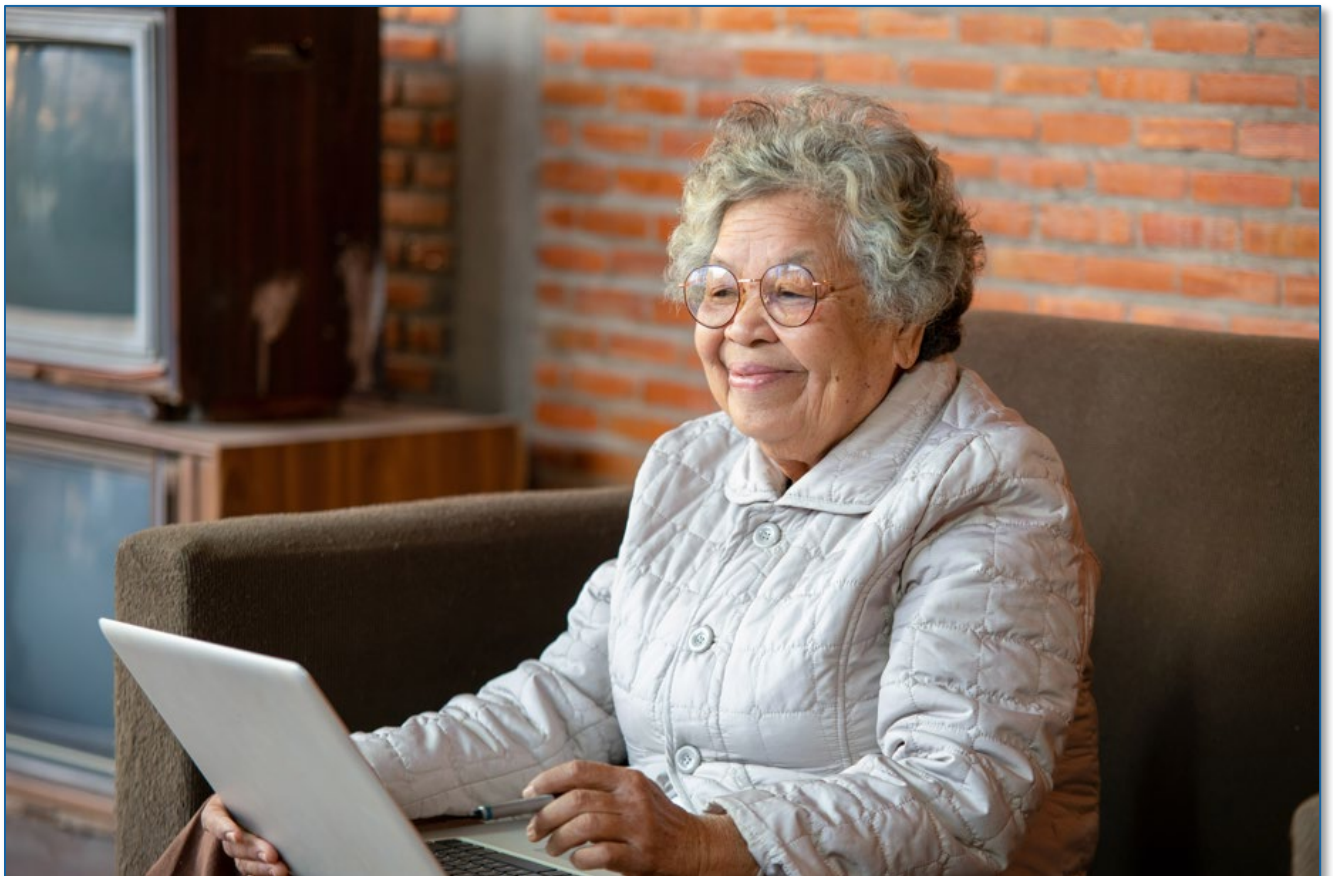
***Increasing Public Awareness of Elder Abuse***

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, AIS continued a media campaign with print, social media, and digital billboard ads to increase public awareness regarding elder abuse prevention and reporting. The print advertisement was run in 10 local publications, including two published in Spanish, with a total circulation of over 366,000 copies.

AIS Outreach & Education staff also spread the message about elder abuse through trainings to mandated reporters and community members. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, staff trained 1,363 mandated reporters and provided 110 community members with training on elder abuse.

***Elder Justice Task Force (EJTF)***

Incidents of internet and wire fraud targeting older adults continue to grow. However, in calendar year 2023, through EJTF, a collaboration with APS, the FBI, and the District Attorney’s office, \$1.4 million of stolen funds belonging to county residents were frozen. Once assets are frozen, local and federal authorities can then continue their investigations and work with financial institutions to secure these funds to return to victims. Additionally, the EJTF collaboration resulted in a total of \$776,000 in funds that were seized in the FBI’s Financial Fraud Kill Chain and Financial Fraud Asset Forfeiture efforts.



## NEXT STEPS

In Fiscal Year 2024-25 the County and partners will extend their efforts with the Dignity at Home Fall Prevention program. This will include dissemination of free fall prevention kits to eligible recipients and a special focus in the CalFresh Healthy Living newsletter in Fall 2024. Advanced trainings in the Abuse in Later Life will be held for law enforcement and service providers on signs of abuse and deficiencies in care in Fall 2024. Additionally, the San Diego County Elder and Dependent Abuse Blueprint will be updated and shared with law enforcement partners. The Elder Justice Task Force will continue pursuit and justice against scammers and return of funds to older adult victims.

## Learn More

- San Diego County Adult Protective Services:  
[www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/Services/Adult-Protective-Services.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/Services/Adult-Protective-Services.html)
- San Diego County Fall Prevention and the Fall Prevention Task Force:  
[www.sandiegofallprevention.org](http://www.sandiegofallprevention.org)
- San Diego County District Attorney Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse  
<https://www.sdca.org/helping/elder-abuse>
- San Diego County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:  
[www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/Services/Long-Term-Care-Ombudsman-Program.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/Services/Long-Term-Care-Ombudsman-Program.html)



# PREPAREDNESS



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

To date over 6,000 copies of the *Personal Disaster Plan for People Who May Need Assistance* have been distributed in digital or hard-copy formats.

### Vision:

Older adults and their caregivers are prepared to be safe during disasters.

### Current Landscape:

Disaster preparedness and how to stay safe during an emergency are particularly important for those with unique needs. The County's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is responsible for disaster response planning and coordinates the countywide response to emergencies. The plans in place for disaster response include designated roles and components to assist residents with "Access and Functional Needs (AFN)," which includes those with needs related to disability, language access, or who need another type of assistance. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer program provides training to community members about effective disaster response. The CERT program is designed to help individuals, including older adults, learn how to protect themselves, their families, and neighbors in an emergency.

OES coordinates the AFN Working Group, which is comprised of representatives from local aging and disability organizations, and County departments including AIS.

The Cool Zone program, coordinated by the County, provides residents with safe respite from the hot weather during extreme heat events. This countywide network of free, air-conditioned settings, such as libraries or community centers, allows for anyone to escape the extreme heat during the summer,



early fall, and during excessive heat events. In addition, the Cool Zone Fan program provides free electric fans to eligible older adults who do not have access to air conditioning and are unable to attend a Cool Zone site.

During dangerous weather conditions, the operators of the regional electric system, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), may proactively shut off electricity in certain areas to prevent it from becoming a source of wildfire ignition. SDG&E coordinates the Public Safety Power Shutoff Working Group, which includes the County, 211 San Diego, and many other community partners. One goal of this group is to educate residents on how to sign up for alerts and other relevant programs.

As part of the County's disaster response plans, departments have protocols in place for communication with vulnerable clients in ongoing programs to help ensure that they are informed of evacuation orders and to provide resources when applicable.

### Accomplishment Highlights:

Preparedness and response accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2023-24 included improved personal preparedness among more older adults, and the establishment of new "Cool Zones" for use during extreme heat.

#### ***Personal Disaster Plan for People Who May Need Assistance***

The *Personal Disaster Plan for People Who May Need Assistance* is a joint effort of AIS and OES that guides residents to make their own individualized plan for themselves and their family. Initially published in 2021, the guides have continued to be very popular. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, more than 4,250 copies were

distributed in either digital or hard-copy formats, bringing the total number distributed since initial publication to over 19,000 copies. The hard copies are mailed directly to residents' homes and also distributed through libraries and other community sites. Recipients continue to access the guide from the ReadySanDiego website ([readysandiego.org](https://readysandiego.org)) in 12 different languages and audio format. This guide was also used by CDA to inform the development of a new state guide for disaster preparedness for older adults.

To further strengthen these efforts, the AFN Working Group members train community residents on making an effective personal disaster plan. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Working Group conducted five Train-the-Trainer workshops and trained 61 people, including participation at a State of California Office of Emergency Services seminar.



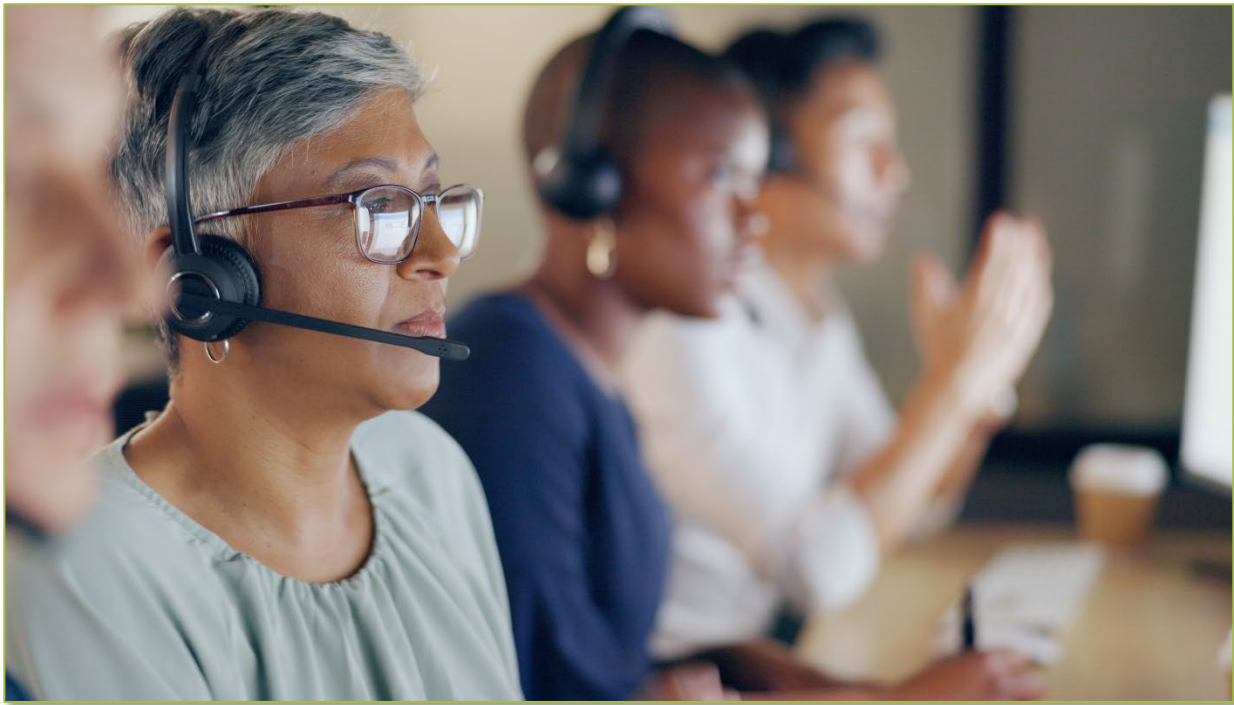
#### **Cool Zones**

Cool Zone sites help older adults and other residents to stay safe during extreme heat events. AIS coordinated community partners to provide 120 sites in Summer and early Fall of 2023 and worked with 211 San Diego to connect residents with free transportation to the sites. Six hundred eighty-four (684) fans were also distributed to those who were unable to attend a Cool Zone site.

**Flood Response**

As a result of severe storms in January 2024, some communities in San Diego County experienced devastating flooding. The response included the City of San Diego, the County, and many local organizations and individuals. The County set up Local Assistance Centers in the days following the flooding, which provided information on disaster aid as well as ongoing resources that could be helpful for impacted residents.

For those residents whose homes had been severely damaged and who did not have access to an alternative place to stay, the County’s Temporary Lodging Program provided emergency shelter in hotel rooms. In addition, the County provided weekly meal vouchers for impacted residents to use with Uber Eats. While these programs were not specific to any age group, older adults and people with disabilities were among those served by the program.




**NEXT STEPS**

The AFN Working Group will continue to educate the community on personal disaster preparedness by sharing Office of Emergency Services and State resources. Disaster preparedness efforts will focus on further streamlining processes and reducing response times within the first 24 hours after declared emergencies.

## Learn More

Want to learn more about preparedness resources? Explore County departments and partner information.

- San Diego County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):  
[www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/oes/community/oes\\_il\\_CERT.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/oes/community/oes_il_CERT.html)
- Office of Emergency Services Access and Functional Needs Working Group:  
[www.engage.sandiegocounty.gov/oesafnwg](http://www.engage.sandiegocounty.gov/oesafnwg)
- County of San Diego Cool Zone Program:  
[www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/cool\\_zones.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ais/cool_zones.html)



The screenshot shows the website for Aging & Independence Services. The header includes a home icon, navigation links for HOME, SERVICES, NEWS & NOTES, INITIATIVES, and VOLUNTEER, and a partial link for ABOUT. Below the navigation is a call center number: 800-339-4661. A photograph shows two women smiling; one is holding a cup. Below the photo is a blue bar with the title "Cool Zone Site Program". The text below the title provides an overview of the program, managed by Aging & Independence Services (AIS) in partnership with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). It states that the program season runs from June 1 to October 31 and that the sites offer free air-conditioned spaces for residents to stay cool during extreme heat.

**CALL CENTER: 800-339-4661**

### Cool Zone Site Program

**OVERVIEW:** The Cool Zone program is managed by Aging & Independence Services (AIS) in partnership with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E).

The Cool Zone program season runs from June 1 - October 31.

The Cool Zone sites offer free air-conditioned spaces for people to stay cool. The sites are free and a way for residents to save energy for the whole community. Anyone looking to escape the extreme heat may go to one of the sites.



# SILVER ECONOMY



## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

**1,056** senior volunteers contributed **230,237** hours of service worth **\$8.6 million** in financial value to the region in Fiscal Year 2023-24.

### Vision:

There is a skilled and diverse workforce of caregivers to support the older adult population. Also, older adults have opportunities to stay engaged in the community through volunteering or paid work.

### Current Landscape:

#### *Caregiving Economy*

When older adults need care, they may rely on informal family caregivers, but they may also need formal caregivers, that is, people who are paid to provide assistance with activities of daily living. These caregivers are sometimes called “personal care attendants” or other titles and they provide non-licensed, non-medical, home care. Many personal care attendants work for home care agencies, or they may operate independently. Except for certain situations, usually involving recovery from a hospitalization, most home care is not covered by Medicare. However, for older adults or people with disabilities who are eligible for Medi-Cal, the IHSS program pays for individual providers to serve as paid caregivers. Other Medi-Cal funded programs, such as the new Medi-Cal Transformation Community Supports, also provide this type of home care.

There is a shortage of caregivers in California and the nation that is widely recognized as a serious problem. California’s older adult population will need approximately 500,000 more caregivers over the next 10 years. The

IHSS Public Authority is the employer of record for IHSS providers and leads several initiatives to train caregivers and attract more people to this field.

**Volunteering**

Older adults can stay active in community life through volunteer opportunities. There are many community organizations that involve older adult volunteers in their operations. Several County departments involve older adults in meaningful volunteer jobs or connect them to engagement opportunities with other organizations in the community. The Department of Animal Services, Department of Parks and Recreation, San Diego County Library, and Registrar of Voters all rely on older adult volunteers. Within HHSA, volunteers conduct a variety of roles, such as assisting children at the Polinsky Children’s Center (operated by the Child and Family Well-Being Department) or providing supplemental recreational activities at the Edgemoor skilled nursing facility (operated by BHS).

Managed by AIS, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program relies upon volunteers who are responsible for visiting skilled nursing facilities and other residential facilities to protect the rights of the residents.



AIS also manages two volunteer programs designed specifically for older adults to be connected to a volunteer opportunity that matches their interests, abilities, and schedule. The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), an AmeriCorps program, and Senior Volunteers in Action (SVA), connect older adults to approximately 70 community organizations to engage in volunteer work ranging from gleaning fruit trees to hosting visitors at the Midway Museum.

One volunteer-based program that is supported by RSVP volunteers is the You Are Not Alone (YANA) program. This free service is for people who live within the jurisdiction of the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department and other participating law enforcement jurisdictions. YANA offers phone calls five days a week and weekly in-person visits. It provides peace of mind and a sense of security for those who enjoy their independence, but who lack friends or family to check on them regularly.

In addition to providing volunteer opportunities to older adults, AIS also publicizes job opportunities from various community organizations to its email

distribution list of older adult and community stakeholders.

**Accomplishment Highlights:**

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, volunteer opportunities and recruitment of caregivers received major focus.

***IHSS Caregiver Recruitment and Support***

IHSS clients are among those who are impacted by the shortage of professional caregivers. Addressing this shortage for IHSS clients and others in need of caregivers is a priority for the County and the IHSS Public Authority. Following direction of the Board on October 5, 2021 (9), the IHSS Public Authority has worked to address the care shortage by conducting community outreach and implementing other measures to make this critical job more appealing and accessible to potential caregivers.

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the IHSS Public Authority expanded training and recruitment to increase the number of caregivers available to serve IHSS recipients. The increased training offerings included a partnership with San Diego State University’s Center for Excellence in Aging and Longevity to launch the San Diego Caregiver Connections initiative to strengthen, diversify, and expand the pool of available caregivers. The focus of the initiative is on increasing both paid and family caregivers’ knowledge and skills, particularly among diverse, low-income, multilingual, and under-resourced communities. Additionally, the initiative establishes a comprehensive approach to peer support, recognizing the pivotal role in fostering emotional well-being and resilience among the caregiver community. During Fiscal Year 2023-24, over



2,700 participants completed over 37,200 hours of training.

IHSS Public Authority also provided individualized training on the Electronic Timesheet System to 2,847 individual caregivers and enrolled a total of 9,687 new caregivers with a quicker enrollment period than in previous years. Most of these new caregivers were friends or family of IHSS recipients and 1,204 were “registry caregivers,” those available for IHSS recipients who do not have someone in their own circle to serve in the caregiver role. This represented a 41% increase over last year’s recruitment of registry caregivers.

In addition to outreach to recruit more caregivers, IHSS Public Authority provides Care Academy Program caregiver training classes at no cost to interested caregivers. The Care Academy Program provides training for caregivers to increase their job skills and helps them develop meaningful career advancement opportunities in the healthcare industry. This supplements other training provided by IHSS Public Authority and includes topic areas such as behavioral health, dementia, universal precautions, and more. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, more than 3,600 caregivers received training offered by IHSS Public Authority.

**Volunteer Opportunities for Older Adults**

AIS regularly recruits organizations that host volunteers to become part of the RSVP and SVA programs, to boost the participation of older adults in their volunteer activities. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, over 1,050 active volunteers served over 230,200 hours at 68 partner organizations throughout the county. Organizations provided a variety of services to local communities, including support to law enforcement agencies, assistance with docent work at museums, and support to social service organizations. For example, YANA volunteers conducted 4,109 visits and made 29,450 phone calls in the fiscal year.

A County analysis found that the value of RSVP and SVA volunteers’ service to these organizations totaled more than \$8.6 million for the community.

The Ombudsman program involved nearly 40 volunteers, 27 of whom are age 60 or older. An analysis of the Ombudsman volunteer data showed that these volunteers contributed more than \$80,000 for this program.



## NEXT STEPS

IHSS Public Authority’s work to provide training and develop career pathways for caregivers will continue. In addition, IHSS Public Authority will increase efficiency and accessibility of provider enrollment by implementing digital forms and digital packets of information for prospective caregivers to obtain and submit them more quickly. Volunteer and site recruitment remains a key priority of the AIS Senior Volunteer programs.

## Learn More

Learn more about becoming an IHSS provider or how to volunteer:

- IHSS Public Authority: [www.sdihsdpa.com](http://www.sdihsdpa.com)
- County of San Diego Volunteer Program (various departments): [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/volunteer.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/volunteer.html)
- AIS Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP & SVA), includes information on community volunteer sites as well as AIS opportunities such as Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: [www.seniorvolunteersd.org](http://www.seniorvolunteersd.org)







# MEDICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM



## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the number of IHSS recipients increased from approximately 39,200 to over 42,000, all of whom are older adults and/or persons with disabilities.

## **Vision:**

Care coordination among medical and social services provides proactive, seamless, prevention focused, and person-centered support for older adults.

## **Current Landscape:**

Older adults and caregivers frequently struggle to navigate and understand available services in a large and fragmented medical and social services system based on multiple funding streams. While Medicare covers almost all adults aged 65 and older for their health care needs, this does not include Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). These are the services that help people stay independent and avoid living in skilled nursing facilities, such as personal assistance with activities of daily living, assisted living, and home modifications. Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid health insurance program for low-income residents, covers some LTSS. Medi-Cal is used by people without Medicare and also to supplement Medicare.

Now, more LTSS are offered through Medi-Cal managed care plans due to Medi-Cal Transformation, the State reform initiative previously known as CalAIM. Medi-Cal funds also support major California social service programs for older and disabled residents that are operated by HHS departments. One of these programs is IHSS, through which AIS conducts assessment and authorization of caregiving hours, and IHSS Public Authority serves as the employer of record for the Individual Providers hired and trained by the recipients to provide that care. IHSS provides

personal assistance with activities of daily living to a rapidly growing number of local recipients, now totaling more than 42,000. This includes older adults, children, and others with disabilities.

AIS also offers the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP), another Medi-Cal funded program, which provides care coordination for more than 500 San Diegans with both Medicare and Medi-Cal. Skilled Nursing Facilities provide rehabilitative care after hospitalizations and also “custodial care” for older adults who need a high level of daily assistance. Skilled Nursing Facility care is only covered in certain situations by Medicare and Medi-Cal.

Improving care transitions is one of the goals of Medi-Cal Transformation as there are many challenges involved in ensuring that older adults have the care they need as they transition from a hospital to home or a residential facility or from a facility back to home. HHSA’s Medical Care Services (MCS) and AIS are actively involved in the roll-out of Medi-Cal Transformation with the goal of identifying and addressing gaps in care in the Medi-Cal system, as well as improving coordination across the different services.

In addition to Medi-Cal programs, HHSA departments use a wide variety of funding sources to provide critical components of the medical and social service system in our region. Self Sufficiency Services supports low-





income, older adults with enrollment in programs such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh food assistance. BHS provides, via contracted community organizations, many programs for residents with Serious Mental Illness (as well as prevention programs that are described in this report's section on Health & Community Support); Public Health Services (PHS) programs that serve older adults include vaccinations, the Oral Health Program, HIV services, and the Tuberculosis Control Program. AIS provides, via contracted community organizations, the federal Older Americans Act Older Californians Nutrition Program that provides home-delivered and congregate meals. The AIS Call Center handles over 73,000 calls each year to connect older adults to health and social services provided by the County as well as those provided by community agencies.

### **Accomplishment Highlights:**

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the Medical & Social Services System priority area accomplishments centered on IHSS service delivery, the Healthy Brain Initiative launch, educating professionals in best practices, and care transitions resources.

### ***In-Home Supportive Services – Ahead in Timely Service***

As described above, the IHSS program provides essential services to those in need. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, IHSS recipients increased from approximately 39,200 to over 42,000 recipients. In addition to processing applications, conducting initial home visits, and authorizing initial service, the IHSS program conducts annual reassessments to determine continuing need or changes in need. San Diego County is ranked #4 in the state for both average annual reassessment compliance rate and applications processed within 90 days, with a 99.94% average reassessment compliance rate and a 99.60% application compliance rate for Fiscal Year 2023-24. These timeliness results exceed the average compliance rate for other large counties (89.09%) and the statewide average (90.29%). In addition to these compliance rates for the 90-day statewide benchmarks, 95.28% of applications were processed within 45 days.

### ***Best Practices in Age-Friendly Health Systems***

The County's Medical Care Services Department (MCS) partnered with AIS to conduct a multi-pronged approach to educate professionals working in local Federally Qualified Health Centers, and community-based organizations that serve older adults, on best practices of Age-Friendly Health Systems. The Age-Friendly Health Systems model was created by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and it serves as a framework for person-centered care. It uses the "4 M" approach, emphasizing what *Matters* to the patient, *Medications*, *Mentation*, and *Mobility*. The MCS team developed educational



information for delivery to health professionals via several methods. A module on the GeriPal podcast garnered 10,000 downloads in the fiscal year. Other presentations reached approximately 1,000 local professionals.

### ***Improving Clinical Care for Dementia***

As described in more detail in the Dementia priority area of this report, HHSA’s AIS and MCS teams have worked with the Alzheimer’s Project Clinical Roundtable to integrate dementia screening and related clinical practice tools into the Electronic Health Record systems of local healthcare organizations. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, additional funding was received from CDPH for the Healthy Brain Initiative grant, which will support the coordination of these efforts. Priority will be given to health systems that include significant numbers of older adult Medi-Cal members who receive their primary care in that health system.

### ***Transitions of Care Toolkit***

The Healthy San Diego Duals Transitions of Care Workgroup convenes staff working in multiple sectors, including HHSA, Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs), hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and community-based organizations. The Workgroup’s goal is to improve coordination among often siloed care systems for adults who are dually eligible for Medi-Cal and Medicare, and facilitate these individuals receiving LTSS in a timely manner. In the last year, the Workgroup identified several issues in this arena:

- Some patients are physically ready to be discharged from hospitalization, but they do not have the care they need at home.
- Hospital and other case managers face barriers in identifying residential facilities that will accept discharging Medi-Cal patients.

- Hospital and other case managers also face challenges getting care set up in the home as soon as it is needed.

To support more effective navigation of this complex system, the Workgroup developed a plan to create a Transitions of Care Toolkit. The first draft of the Toolkit includes direct points of contact for Medi-Cal Plans and hospital case managers, a Personal Care Services chart with more than 10 Medi-Cal personal care options (e.g., IHSS, Medi-Cal Transformation, Community Supports, Assisted Living Waiver, PACE, and more), and a prioritized list of training topics.

### ***Pilot Project in Rural Area Succeeds in Reducing Hospital Readmissions***

A recent partnership between the County and Grossmont Health District paired nurses with paramedics to provide follow-up services to patients discharging from Sharp Grossmont and living in the Mountain Empire rural area. The services were tailored to reducing the health and safety risks for the individual patients, 71% of whom were age 65 and older. According to Sharp, during the first 6 months of the pilot, the 30-day unplanned readmission rate for those enrolled in the program was 4.0%. The readmission rate for those residents who declined the service was 13.9%. Sharp identified about \$350,000 in annual “cost



avoidance.” Due to this success, Sharp Grossmont Hospital and the Grossmont Healthcare District have made this a permanent program.

**Public Health Services**

A variety of programs offered by PHS supported the health and wellbeing of older adults during Fiscal Year 2023-24. Older adults and people with disabilities received potentially life-saving vaccines in their own homes through the Homebound Vaccine Program. PHS’s Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch, along with AIS and contractors (e.g., Champions for Health), and community partners (e.g., Meals on Wheels San Diego) made 1,015 referrals to the program for COVID-19 and flu vaccinations over the past fiscal year. In addition, the Epidemiology and Immunization Services

Branch conducted a public awareness campaign to encourage vaccination for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. The “*Worth the Shot*” campaign encouraged adults aged 65 and over, caregivers, and parents to pursue vaccinations. The campaign took place via radio, streaming audio, social media, digital search platforms, and “out of home” platforms (e.g., billboards).

Oral health is another area of concern for older adults. Poor oral health has been linked to problems such as cardiovascular disease. PHS provided oral health education, resources, and referral information to 268 older adults and children at three Grandparents Raising Grandchildren events in Fiscal Year 2023-24, helping this group to access the tools they need to stay healthy.



**NEXT STEPS**

The agencies involved with the work described in this section will continue to serve older adults through their ongoing programs. With the growing older adult population, it is anticipated that IHSS enrollment will exceed 46,000 by June 2025. As Medi-Cal Transformation continues its multi-year roll-out in California, the County will actively participate with regional providers in local implementation. The Healthy San Diego Duals Transitions of Care Workgroup plans to complete the Transitions of Care Toolkit so that it can be used by local professionals as soon as possible. The Alzheimer’s Project Clinical Roundtable will support health systems as they further integrate dementia tools into their Electronic Medical Record systems. PHS worked with MCS and community partners to develop a successful grant application to expand oral health education, outreach, and services to older adults beginning July 1, 2024. The County is one of nine partners awarded this funding from the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation.

# CONCLUSION

Now going into its sixth year, the Aging Roadmap is a guiding framework for the aging-related work across County departments and in collaboration with community partners. A key element of success across the ten priority areas has been active collaboration between the County and dozens of community organizations, older adults, and caregivers. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, there was extensive community engagement to gather input in multiple formats to inform programming going forward. The feedback echoed sentiments heard in the last few years and reinforced the continuing importance of the ten priority areas. Indeed, older adults stressed that affordable housing is a major issue in our region, and they expressed the importance of staying active and engaged, supporting caregivers, and improving access to and coordination of health and social services. Our region has many resources to support older adults to age well, and there is still a great need for more awareness of these resources.

In the last year, significant accomplishments have included new affordable housing developments with units designated for older adults, providing technology and training to older adults to help them stay socially engaged, and improvements to healthcare organizations' electronic medical record systems to identify and care for patients with dementia.

Looking ahead, the County and community partners will continue to work towards the vision for each of ten Aging Roadmap priority areas. Best practices and lessons learned from temporary programs, such as the No-Cost Transportation Program and technology training programs, will be shared with others and will inform services when there are future opportunities. The Action Plan in Appendix A describes the programs and initiatives that are expected to occur over the next four years in each of the priority areas. AIS programs are expected to continue growing – for example, IHSS is projected to exceed 46,000 recipients in the next year. Among the notable upcoming initiatives are several new affordable housing developments, and a project with healthcare organizations to continue improving their electronic medical record systems to enable consistent best practices in dementia care. Together the programs and initiatives of the Aging Roadmap will advance the vision of a community in which we can all age well.



# PARTNERS

As highlighted in this annual report, the County departments, community organizations, and residents that have contributed to advancing the ten priority areas have created accomplishments that could only have been achieved through ongoing collaboration. With appreciation, we would like to recognize the following partners:

## **Age-Friendly Municipalities**

City of Carlsbad  
City of Chula Vista  
City of Imperial Beach  
City of La Mesa  
City of National City  
City of Oceanside  
City of San Diego  
City of Solana Beach

## **Community Committees Coordinated by Aging & Independence Services**

Age-Friendly Roundtable  
Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council  
Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team  
Age Well Housing Team  
Age Well Social Participation & Inclusion Team  
Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team  
Caregiver Coalition of San Diego  
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Workgroup  
Health Promotion Community Committee  
Nor-CAN (Community Action Network for North County)  
SanDi-ECAN (Community Action Network for Central and East San Diego County)  
San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force  
SoCAN (Community Action Network for South County)

## **Other Community Partners**

211 San Diego  
511 San Diego  
AARP  
Access & Functional Needs (AFN) Working Group  
Access to Independence

Alzheimer's Association San Diego/Imperial Chapter  
Alzheimer's San Diego  
Casa Familiar  
Champions for Health  
City of Santee  
Community Congregational Development Corporation  
El Cajon Collaborative  
ElderHelp of San Diego  
Elder Justice Task Force  
Elder Protection Council  
Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation  
Fallbrook Senior Center  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Fourth District Seniors Resource Center  
Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center  
Healthy San Diego Duals Transitions of Care Workgroup  
Interfaith Community Services  
Jewish Family Service of San Diego  
Kaiser Permanente  
Metropolitan Transit System  
Mira Mesa Senior Center  
Naval Medical Center San Diego  
North County Transit District  
Oceanside Country Club Senior Center  
Regional Task Force on Homeless  
Salvation Army, El Cajon  
San Diego Association of Governments  
San Diego County Chiefs' and Sheriff's Association  
San Diego Foundation  
San Diego Gas & Electric  
San Diego Housing Commission  
San Diego LGBT Community Center  
San Diego Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly  
San Diego Seniors Community Foundation  
San Diego Senior Center Coalition  
San Diego State University  
San Diego Union-Tribune  
Scripps Health  
Serving Seniors  
Sharp HealthCare  
Southern Caregiver Resource Center  
TrueCare  
Union of Pan Asian Communities

University of California San Diego  
UrbanLife  
Village Encinitas

## **County Departments and Offices**

### ***County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency***

Aging & Independence Services  
Behavioral Health Services  
Homeless Solutions & Equitable Communities  
Housing & Community Development Services  
IHSS Public Authority  
Medical Care Services  
Office of Strategy and Innovation  
Public Health Services

### ***County of San Diego Land Use & Environment Group***

Department of Parks & Recreation  
Planning & Development Services  
Department of Public Works  
San Diego County Library

### ***County of San Diego Public Safety Group***

Animal Services  
District Attorney's Office  
Office of Emergency Services  
Sheriff's Office

# ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms and abbreviations are organized in alphabetical order

**AAA** – Area Agencies of Aging  
**ARF** – Adult Residential Facilities  
**ARPA** – American Rescue Plan Act  
**ADRD** – Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias  
**AFN** – Access & Functional Needs  
**AIS** – County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services  
**APS** – Adult Protective Services  
**ART** – Alzheimer’s Response Team  
**ASP** – Augmented Services Program  
**Board** – San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
**BHS** – Behavioral Health Services  
**CalAIM** – California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal  
**CASOA** – Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults  
**CDA** – California Department of Aging  
**County** – County of San Diego  
**EJTF** – Elder Justice Task Force  
**FCSP** – Family Caregiver Support Program  
**Guidelines** – Physician Guidelines for the Screening, Evaluation, and Management of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias  
**HCDS** – County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Housing & Community Development Services  
**HSEC-OHS** – County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Office of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, Office of Homeless Solutions  
**HHSA** – County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency  
**IHSS** – In-Home Supportive Services  
**LTCOP** – Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program  
**LTSS** – Long-Term Services and Supports  
**MCS** – Medical Care Services  
**MPA** – Master Plan for Aging  
**OES** – County of San Diego Public Safety Group, Office of Emergency Services  
**Public Authority** – County of San Diego IHSS Public Authority  
**PDS** – County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group, Planning & Development Services  
**RCFE** – Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly  
**RSVP** – Retired and Senior Volunteer Program  
**SCRC** – Southern Caregiver Resource Center  
**SRSP** – Shallow Rental Subsidy Program  
**SVA** – Senior Volunteers in Action  
**UCSD** – University of California San Diego

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# APPENDIX

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# APPENDIX A: AGING ROADMAP

## ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2028

As the older adult population continues to grow and becomes more culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse, our systems of care need to be flexible to meet a wider range of needs. Much has changed since the original Aging Roadmap goals were developed in 2019. COVID-19 exacerbated many challenges for older adults and brought to the forefront new issues and concerns.

A community needs assessment was conducted in Fall 2023 to inform the development of Aging & Independence Services (AIS) programs and the Aging Roadmap Action Plan. The Aging Roadmap Action Plan 2024-2028 below includes programs and initiatives of County contractors, committees coordinated by AIS staff, and aging-related work of departments across the County. The ten priority areas are: Health & Community Support, Housing, Social Participation, Transportation, Dementia, Caregiver Support, Safety, Preparedness, Silver Economy, and Medical & Social Services System.

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# HEALTH & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## Vision:

When changes and challenges in health occur, older adults and their families are able to find and access relevant resources, support, and care in their community. The community promotes mental health and physical health, for people of all ages and abilities.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Equity Focused Outreach and Engagement	Aging & Independence Services	Increase awareness of aging resources and services through culturally relevant and equity-focused outreach and engagement strategies such as conducting presentations and hosting resource tables in a variety of communities, providing translation, and soliciting diverse community input.
		Publicize information about County programs, community resources, and events via Gov Delivery e-network of stakeholders, AIS Quarterly Newsletter, presentations, and other community outreach.
Promote Physical and Mental Health	Aging & Independence Services and contracted community partners	Empower older adults and caregivers to be safe, resilient, healthy, and informed by providing fitness classes, events and workshops on topics including on fall prevention and chronic disease self-management.
	Behavioral Health Services and contracted community partners	Promote mental wellbeing with education, community depression screenings, and focused programs to engage older adults.
Leverage Partnerships	Aging & Independence Services	Leverage existing partnerships with regional community partners, community centers, and senior centers to ensure residents are aware of and have access to programs which they may be eligible for.
Reducing Digital Divide	Aging & Independence Services and contracted community partners	Bring technology programs to older adults to reduce the impacts of the digital divide.

# HOUSING

## Vision:

Older adults live in safe and affordable housing that is located near goods, services, and activities, all of which allow them to age in their community.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
New housing	Planning and Development Services	Finalize development and present program options to the Board of Supervisors for incentivizing the development of new senior housing.
	Housing & Community Development Services	Continue construction on affordable senior housing apartment complexes.
Homelessness Prevention and Intervention	Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities and contracted community partners	Provide rental support to low-income older adults through continued implementation of the Pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program.
		Provide housing navigation and case management to support older adults experiencing chronic homelessness through the Home Safe program.
		Conduct pilot Home Share Program for Older Adults.
	Aging & Independence Services	Support housing insecure Adult Protective Services clients to find and secure safe housing through the Home Safe program.
Supportive Housing	Behavioral Health Services	Provide older adult residents living with Serious Mental Illness in affordable housing with Full Service Partnership programs to support their housing security and other needs.
Housing Alternatives	AIS Age Well Housing Team  Planning and Development Services	Increase awareness of affordable housing opportunities by providing community education on options such as Accessory Dwelling Units and shared housing programs, and ensure that older adults know how and where to access housing information.
Aging in Place	Aging & Independence Services	Provide resources for Age-Friendly home modifications.

	Housing and Community Development Services	
Collaborative Efforts and Education	AIS Age Well Housing Team	Enhance efforts of local housing partners by providing a forum for organizations to share information regarding projects for older adults. These partners approach housing from multiple angles, including land use and building codes, affordable housing development, home modifications, and supporting housing insecure residents.
		Educate the community on current older adult housing issues and resources.

# SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

## Vision:

Older adults have access to a range of social and community engagement opportunities that promote active living, reduce isolation, and provide enriching experiences with others across age groups and generations.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Bridging the Digital Divide	<p>Aging &amp; Independence Services and contracted community partners</p> <p>Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities</p>	Through the AIS Digital Connections program, increase access to technology and improve digital literacy for older adults throughout San Diego County by providing no-cost tablets, resources for no- or low-cost broadband, and information on local digital literacy training options.
Intergenerational Connection	<p>Aging &amp; Independence Services</p> <p>Department of Parks &amp; Recreation</p>	Encourage intergenerational connection by providing interactive programs that bring different age groups together for activities such as pickleball, cooking, and gardening at County community centers and other community sites.
	Aging & Independence Services	Provide technical assistance to community organizations on how to develop and successfully implement intergenerational programs.
Access to Social Engagement	AIS Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team	Offer education and resources about local transportation options that enhance mobility independence, regional awareness, and access to social activities.
	AIS Age Well Social Participation & Inclusion Team	Publicize and distribute guides for social engagement: <i>Ways to Engage</i> and <i>Get Connected!</i>
	Aging & Independence Services	Publicize information about community events, programs, and opportunities to engage via Gov Delivery e-network of stakeholders, AIS Quarterly Newsletter, presentations, and other community outreach.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Vision:

Older adults have access to safe and affordable transportation options that are accessible for all ages and abilities.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Transportation Education	AIS Age Well Transportation & Community Connections Team	Encourage event coordinators to increase older adult access to their events by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting events and activities at accessible locations near public transportation</li> <li>• Including transportation options on event publicity</li> </ul>
		Offer education and resources about local and alternative transportation options that enhance mobility independence, regional awareness, and access to daily life activities.
Equitable Access	Aging & Independence Services and contracted community partners	With American Rescue Plan Act funding, continue the two-year No-Cost Transportation Program for Older Adults in 2025. Receive feedback from residents about transportation needs and challenges to inform development of future programs.

# DEMENTIA

## Vision:

San Diegans have the information they need to reduce their risk of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD); residents with ADRD receive the highest standard of clinical care; individuals with ADRD are well cared for and supported by “Dementia-Friendly” communities to be as independent as possible; and family members have the support they need to care for their loved ones.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Prevention and equity	AIS Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team	Work with community partners to develop and share brain health information that is regionally relevant, engaging to all ages, and culturally tailored to connect with diverse populations throughout the county.
Improving ADRD Care for patients and their caregivers	Aging & Independence Services and contracted community partners Medical Care Services	Work closely with The Alzheimer’s Project Clinical Roundtable as well as other dementia and brain health professionals and institutions to share information that is supportive of the effective screening, diagnosis, and care management of those living with dementia.  Work with healthcare organizations on improving their Electronic Health Record systems to support best practices in ADRD care, and supporting physicians’ offices to connect patients and families to community resources.
	Aging & Independence Services	The Alzheimer’s Response Team (ART) will continue to make home visits to people living with ADRD and their families. ART social workers educate residents on addressing challenges associated with dementia and provide care coordination and linkages to other community resources.

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Building Dementia- Friendly Communities	AIS Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team	Provide workshops and resources to individuals and diverse community sectors (e.g., libraries, restaurants, churches, etc.) to educate them on what it means to be “dementia-friendly” and how to create environments that are welcoming to those living with dementia and their caregivers.
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# CAREGIVER SUPPORT

## Vision:

Caregivers have access to the supports and resources necessary to provide responsive and quality care to older adults, while also tending to their own well-being.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Caregiver Education	Aging & Independence Services  Caregiver Coalition of San Diego	Educate older adults and family caregivers about existing local resources for family caregivers through in-person events and online webinars in a variety of languages.
		Educate staff and volunteers of local organizations (e.g., businesses, non- profits) about existing local resources for family caregivers and how they can educate their teams.
		Continue to support caregivers by updating, publishing, and distributing the <i>Caregiver Handbook</i> to the community.
Caregiver Resources	Aging & Independence Services and contracted community partners	Support eligible family caregivers through Older Americans Act services including care management, legal services, minor home modifications, outreach and education, counseling, and respite.
	Behavioral Health Services and contracted community partners	Provide mental health prevention and early intervention services and resource navigation for family caregivers.



# SAFETY

## Vision:

Older adults and persons with disabilities are safe in their homes and community.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness	District Attorney  Aging & Independence Services	Conduct community awareness and education on elder abuse and scam prevention including training and media campaign with print and social media ads.
		Develop training for first responders to recognize and report signs of abuse and deficiencies in care and wellbeing.
		Support Elder Justice Task Force efforts to bring scammers to justice and focus on creative ways to return the stolen funds to older adult victims.
	District Attorney	Coordinate the Elder Protection Council and provide regular outreach and education to community partners, organizations, and directly to older adults and their caregivers.
Elder Abuse Response	District Attorney	Prosecute cases of elder abuse and support victims.
Protection for Vulnerable Adults	Aging & Independence Services	Seek resolution of complaints and advocate for the rights of residents in long-term care facilities to ensure their dignity, quality of life, and care, through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
		Investigate and respond to reports of elder and dependent adult abuse, and connect victims to resources.

		Provide Public Guardian and Public Administrator services to protect adults who are not capable of managing their personal affairs and finances.
Fall Prevention	San Diego Fall Prevention Task Force	Educate service providers and older adults living in the community about how to prevent falls.
	Aging & Independence Services and Community Partners	Provide Tai Chi classes at various host sites in the community.
		Distribute fall prevention home safety kits to older adults who are susceptible to falls.

# PREPAREDNESS

## Vision:

Older adults and their caregivers are prepared to be safe during disasters.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Strengthen Preparedness	Aging & Independence Services	Distribute the Personal Disaster Plan for People who May Need Assistance booklet in multiple languages, reaching residents throughout San Diego County.  Prepare AFN Working Group members to train community residents on making an effective personal disaster plan.
	Office of Emergency Services  Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Working Group (comprised of community stakeholders such as Cal Fire and disability service organizations)	
Response	Aging & Independence Services and community partners	Coordinate community partners to provide seasonal “Cool Zone” sites for older adults and other residents to stay safe during extreme heat.

# SILVER ECONOMY

## Vision:

There is a skilled and diverse workforce of caregivers to support the older adult population. Also, older adults have opportunities to stay engaged in the community through volunteering or paid work.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Train In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Caregivers	IHSS Public Authority	Expand trainings to increase the number of Individual Providers available to serve as caregivers for IHSS recipients by increasing training offerings and expanding them to different areas of the county.
Recruit IHSS Caregivers		Increase efficiency and accessibility of provider enrollment by creating and implementing mobile enrollment options and expediting the enrollment timeline.
Older Adult Volunteers	Aging & Independence Services	Recruit new organizations that host volunteers and add these organizations to the Senior Volunteer website.
		Support older adults in identifying enriching volunteer opportunities by conducting outreach and assistance with prospective volunteers.

# MEDICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

## Vision:

Care coordination among medical and social services provides proactive, seamless, prevention focused, and person-centered support for older adults.

TOPIC	WHO	PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES
Improving Care	Medical Care Services  Aging & Independence Services	Support The Alzheimer’s Project Clinical Roundtable in advancing their long-term goal to integrate Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias best practices into primary care workflows.
Supporting Providers and Maximizing Independence	Medical Care Services  Aging & Independence Services	Educate health care and social service providers on resources for transitioning residents from facilities to lower levels of care in the community, when appropriate.
	Healthy San Diego Duals Transitions of Care Workgroup	Support seamless referral processes for SNF diversion by finalizing the Transitions of Care Toolkit for Medi-Cal services for older adults.
Essential Social Services	Aging & Independence Services	Provide ongoing essential social services, including In-Home Supportive Services and care coordination programs such as MSSP, SOAR, Linkages, and SD-VISA.
		Assist older adults, persons with disabilities, caregivers, and service providers with information, assistance, and referrals via the Aging & Independence Services Call Center.
	Behavioral Health Services and contracted community partners	Provide essential mental health services for older adults with serious mental illness and substance use disorders.
	Public Health Services	Provide essential public health services for older adults such as vaccinations at Public Health Centers, the Senior Oral Health Coalition, tuberculosis control, and HIV services.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**2024 ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**



# THE ALZHEIMER'S Project

Prevention • Care • Community Support

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO





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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to present the 2024 Alzheimer's Project Annual Report. It was ten years ago that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors directed County of San Diego (County) staff to work with health care providers, researchers, and other community stakeholders to address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) from multiple angles.

The numbers are staggering; in our region, it is estimated that there are more than 98,000 people living with dementia. When a loved one shows signs of memory loss or other symptoms of ADRD, it can be devastating. But with supports in place – education, respite care, a caring doctor, a compassionate community – life with dementia can be more manageable and quality of life can be maximized. Of course, we also want to prevent ADRD to the extent possible. In the last 10 years, research around the world has suggested that modifiable risk factors such as hypertension and smoking account for more than a third of ADRD cases. What is good for the body is good for the brain. By engaging in regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, staying socially connected, and keeping our minds active, we can keep our brains healthy and prevent or delay the onset of dementia.

Over the past ten years, The Alzheimer's Project has taken a multifaceted approach to address Alzheimer's. Here are some of our significant accomplishments:

- Investments in local projects have yielded more than \$15 million in external funds awarded to the County and other organizations to advance efforts in medical research, clinician training, connecting medical care and social services, improving brain health community-wide, and raising awareness of ADRD issues.
- Local physicians created guidelines for screening, diagnosis, and management of ADRD; and more than 4,000 clinicians were trained on these best practices.
- Based on community input, the County's Alzheimer's Response Team was created and has helped more than 870 individuals and families to cope with living with ADRD.
- The County became the regional lead for Dementia Friends California, training individuals and organizations to communicate effectively and support people living with dementia.
- Prevention and brain health have gained traction as science has shown that our actions today can lower our risk for cognitive impairment. The County is the recipient of its second grant from the California Department of Public Health to implement strategies of the national Healthy Brain Initiative.

The issue of Alzheimer's has not yet been solved, but there is a lot to be optimistic about. While the search for a cure continues, we are doing what we can now to improve quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Through The Alzheimer's Project, we have improved clinical care, built dementia capability among social service providers, and improved connections between medical care and social services in San Diego County. Our wider community is gaining access to critical brain health information, as well as tips on how to support those living with dementia to remain engaged and as independent as possible. The Alzheimer's Project has made significant progress, but there is more to be done. We remain committed to this critical work until Alzheimer's is a thing of the past.

Thank you for joining us on this important journey,



Jennifer Bransford-Koons  
Director, Aging & Independence Services

# ABOUT THE ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) is a growing concern. It was ranked by County of San Diego (County) epidemiologists as the fourth leading cause of death in 2022 among San Diego County residents aged 60 and over (Source: California Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics, Office of Health Information and Research, Vital Records Business Intelligence System (2024).), and in 2024 it has been ranked as the second leading cause of death for California (Source: California Department of Public Health. (2024). *California state of public health: Full report 2024.*). It was projected that in 2020 there were more than 98,600 county residents over the age of 55 living with ADRD (Source: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Community Health Statistics Unit (2018). ADRD in San Diego County Report, Appendix A.). The prevalence of ADRD in the county is expected to reach 115,000 by 2030 (Source: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Community Health Statistics Unit (2018). Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias in San Diego County Report, Appendix A.). Loved ones providing care to people living with ADRD are also greatly impacted. The increasing numbers and impact are not unique to the county. The economic and societal burden of ADRD is being felt at the regional, national, and global level, and every year, there are nearly 10 million new cases worldwide (Source: Alzheimer's Disease International. *Dementia statistics.* Alzheimer's Disease International.). Despite advancements in research and treatment, there is currently no cure for ADRD. There is a need for a concerted response from the healthcare, research, and social service sector; as well as at the community level including organizations, neighbors, and

families. It is imperative that we confront the challenges imposed by these diseases.

In 2014, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) launched The Alzheimer's Project, in which County staff bring together



key stakeholders across our region to address ADRD from multiple angles. The Alzheimer's Project's vision is for a region where county residents have the information they need to promote brain health and reduce their risk of ADRD; residents with cognitive concerns receive the highest standard of clinical care; individuals with ADRD are well cared for and supported by "Dementia-Friendly" communities to be as independent as possible; and family members and friends have the support they need to care for their loved ones.

The Alzheimer's Project is led by the County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Aging & Independence Services (AIS), and the accomplishments represent the efforts of the County and several community teams convened by or on behalf of the County. The Alzheimer's Project Clinical Roundtable is a

community team of physicians that works towards improving healthcare and connections between clinical care and social services. The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team focuses on sharing best practices with the broad community. The Caregiver Coalition of San Diego provides education to family caregivers, including those caring for people living with dementia.

The goals of The Alzheimer’s Project have been supported by County funding as well as grants



to the County and to project partners. Indeed, one of the successes of The Alzheimer’s Project has been in leveraging our local collaborative work to bring in more than \$15 million in external funding. A current grant to the County is from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to implement national Healthy Brain Initiative strategies locally. Other current grants include the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), funded by the federal Health Research and Services Administration and Dementia Care Aware (DCA), funded by the California Department of Health Care Services. Both GWEP and DCA were awarded to University of California San

Diego (UCSD), which then created sub-grants with many community partners including the County. These projects support the dissemination and adoption of best practices in clinical care and social services, building stronger connections between the two. Another current grant is to the Clinical Roundtable through UCSD Department of Family Medicine from the UCSD Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion to evaluate the impact of clinical protocols developed through the Clinical Roundtable. Past grants leveraging The Alzheimer’s Project have included nearly \$1 million to the County from the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) to build dementia capability in aging programs, and \$8.73 million in funds from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to local bio-medical research organizations.

There continues to be incredible progress since the launch of The Alzheimer’s Project ten years ago. This report describes accomplishment highlights from Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24, which spanned from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, and notable cumulative impacts since project inception. The timeline on the following pages shows the major activities and milestones.

# ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT MILESTONES



The Board of Supervisors launches The Alzheimer's Project and publishes *A Call to Arms* with initial recommendations.

2014



County joins the Dementia-Friendly America Network.

Clinical Roundtable publishes the first edition of the *Physician Guidelines*.

2016



Dementia Friends USA

AIS becomes regional lead for Dementia Friends.

Alzheimer's Response Team (ART) pilot program launches in east region.

The FIRST Project begins services for persons living with dementia which included cognitive screening.

2018



HEALTHYBRAIN INITIATIVE Collaborative

County is awarded \$750,000 to advance Healthy Brain Initiative goals.

2020



Local implementation of Dementia Care Aware begins, increasing cognitive screening for Medi-Cal patients.

All San Diego hospitals earn Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation.

2022

2015

San Diego/Imperial Geriatric Education Center (SDIGEC) receives \$2.5 million grant to develop geriatric workforce (first of several similar grants received through 2024).



2017

Clinical Roundtable launches the AlzDxRx mobile application for physicians.

County contributes to drug discovery project; results are leveraged to yield \$8.73 million in NIH funds for local research organizations over the next 4 years.



2019

ART expands to the entire county.

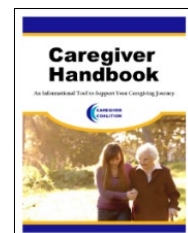
The County launches the Respite Care Voucher program to support family caregivers.

Board of Supervisors approve the Aging Roadmap.



2021

The Caregiver Handbook is revamped, highlighting new resources and providing guidance on behavioral symptom management.



2023

Health systems report integration of cognitive evaluation scores into electronic medical record systems – UCSD found it increased screening rate.





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# CLINICAL ROUNDTABLE

The Alzheimer's Project Clinical Roundtable convenes medical specialists and primary care providers to advance ADRD care in our region. It is coordinated by Champions for Health, the foundational arm of the San Diego County Medical Society.



Primary care physicians are on the frontlines of dementia care due to a shortage of geriatricians, neurologists, and other medical specialists. Prior to the Alzheimer's Project, physicians in the county noted that there was minimal guidance for primary care providers on how to effectively screen, evaluate, and manage dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and more). Early detection can allow impacted patients to get treatment and give patients and their loved ones time to get resources in place, and make plans to ensure a higher quality of life for as long as possible.

## Guidelines

The Clinical Roundtable members developed a consensus on best practices in this field and then created the *Physician Guidelines for the Screening, Evaluation, and Management of*

*Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (Guidelines)*, to equip primary care clinicians with the knowledge and tools they need. The *Guidelines* were first released in 2016 and have been updated regularly thereafter. The *Guidelines* are available in print, online, and as a mobile application, AlzDxRx. The *Guidelines* include best practice algorithms, screening and evaluation instruments, information on federal U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications, guidance on care through various disease stages, and resources for clinicians, patients, and caregivers.

## Training

Clinical Roundtable physicians have offered a variety of trainings to local and national clinicians, including physicians, nurses, and other providers, over the past nine years on how to implement different aspects of the *Guidelines*.

## System Adoption

In addition to creating a set of guidelines and training clinicians to use them, the Clinical Roundtable has a goal to embed these best practices into the ongoing work of clinicians and their associated health systems. In this way, the practices will be standardized and sustained over time for all physicians in a particular clinical practice. It is widely recognized that two important ways to achieve sustainability of best clinical practices are to structure the payment systems in a way that aligns with these best practices, and to support the practices via features in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems that the clinicians use. For example, it is more likely

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that a physician will be able to easily check on a patient’s most result on a cognitive exam if there is a distinct field in the EMR to hold that score. Additionally, it is more likely that the physician will make the most appropriate referrals after a positive screening if there is an algorithm embedded into the EMR system that guides the physician on those next steps. As reported in previous Alzheimer’s Project reports, the Clinical Roundtable has made significant progress on these “system adoption” goals. To date, three health systems have incorporated workflows and standards aligned with the *Guidelines*, and other clinics are preparing for adoption in the coming year.

## **Fiscal Year 2023-24 Highlights**

### **Guidelines**

In June 2024, the Clinical Roundtable published the Fourth Edition of the *Guidelines*. This newest edition includes changes to screening and evaluation algorithms aligned with new criteria from Medicare and Medi-Cal, updates to medication recommendations in response to new and emerging research, the addition of new screening and evaluation instruments, and new patient and caregiver resource materials.

In 2023 and 2024, the County and the Clinical Roundtable collaborated with UCSD on the DCA grant project, a state-wide program that incentivizes primary care teams serving Medi-Cal patients to adopt a comprehensive cognitive screening approach in their practice. This approach is now included in the revised version of the *Guidelines* and has the potential to improve health outcomes of those living with dementia as well as reduce inequities. To date, over 220 local physicians throughout the county have received training on the use of the

DCA approach, and are better equipped to engage in care, connect patients, and implement dementia detection and care in clinical practice.

### **Training – Extending the Reach**

The Clinical Roundtable has continued to deliver training for Continuing Medical Education credits, both through live presentations as well as on-demand content, to clinical providers. Emphasis in the last year has been on increasing and improving screening, although several of the trainings also addressed care planning through the stages of the disease, as well as caregiver education and support. In FY 2023-24, 817 healthcare providers received training on the use of the *Guidelines*, bringing the estimated total number of providers trained since the inception of the Alzheimer’s Project to more than 4,000.

### **Training – Publications and Website Views**

Clinical Roundtable physicians published two articles in the past year in San Diego Physician Magazine, which reaches 11,600 subscribers. The February 2024 article by Michael Lobatz,



*GWEP partners presenting on notable project accomplishments at the annual retreat.*

MD covered the new disease-modifying medications, and a March 2024 article by Lindsey Yourman, MD and Ian Neel, MD discussed the steps that providers can take in care planning with their patients facing cognitive issues. In addition, the California Association of Physician Assistants/Associates includes articles on ADRD screening and care planning in their January and April 2024 magazines with a distribution of 3,400 providers, about 340 of which are throughout the county. In addition, the Champions for Health website's Clinical Roundtable section with educational materials received more than 1,150 views in the fiscal year.

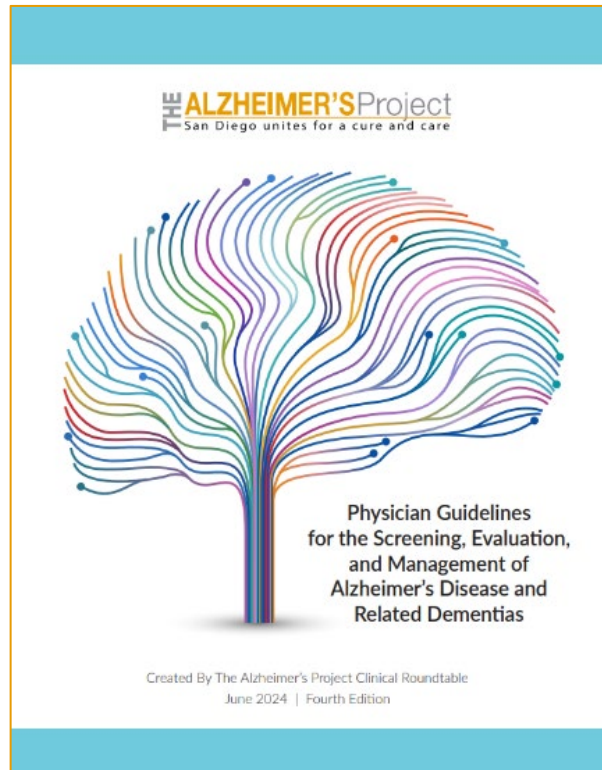


**I HAVE BEEN A CLINICIAN FOR MORE THAN 40** years and have seen changes in treatment including the standard course of anticholinesterase inhibitors and memantine, none of which have worked very well. And I have had to deal with many ethical issues along the way, just as any practitioner who has to deal with issues related to dementia.

- Do you tell your patient of the diagnosis? This is one of the main complaints to physicians, that patients may not know they have dementia.
- Driving: We are in between the DMV and the patient, and we are required to report a diagnosis. The loss of ability to drive can cause great distress.
- What about getting consent for treatment? How do you get consent, and how do we ethically deal with getting consent from a person who does not understand?
- Genetic testing: Do we recommend it? When your patient brings you the results of their 23andMe and it comes out that it indicates APOE positivity, what do you tell them?

The Alzheimer's Project Clinical Roundtable was created in 2014 by the County of San Diego as a realization that ADRD was a public health issue. Currently there are

10 FEBRUARY 2024  
*San Diego Physician magazine publication on disease-modifying medications for Alzheimer's, written by Clinical Roundtable.*



*Newest Fourth Edition of the Guidelines.*

### Training – Equity

To reach primary care physicians working outside of large health systems and who serve low-income residents and communities of color, the Clinical Roundtable began a direct mail campaign in October 2023. Working with Champions for Health, 582 small and solo practice providers in South Bay, Escondido/San Marcos, East County and Central San Diego were identified and received information on the *Guidelines*, on-demand webinars, and other resources that were created by Champions for Health and the Clinical Roundtable. In June 2024, an additional 800 small and solo practice providers also received the updated *Guidelines*.

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## Training – Controversial Medications

Recently the FDA approved monoclonal antibody medications designed to modify the course of Alzheimer’s Disease. Media reports have fanned consumer interest in these new drugs. However, there are significant limitations relating to which patients the drugs are appropriate for, and there are also medical risks and high financial costs to consider. Members of the Clinical Roundtable hosted a robust discussion on issues surrounding these medications at the January 2024 San Diego County Medical Society’s Bioethics Commission meeting. The event drew 56 attendees, mostly physicians, and focused on ethical considerations for monoclonal antibody treatment for Alzheimer’s Disease. The session was taped and continues to be available online.

## System Adoption

The Clinical Roundtable has made progress on goals towards system adoption of the Guidelines. As described in the 2023 report, several health systems including Sharp Rees-Stealy, Sharp Community Medical Group, San Diego Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly, and Veterans Administration San Diego Healthcare had committed to supporting their primary care teams to identify specific protocols to integrate into their health system’s EMR systems.

In the last year, primary care physicians from these organizations took an active role in the Clinical Roundtable, influencing the latest revisions of the *Guidelines*, and working towards system adoption. With funding from UCSD Sanford Institute for Empathy and

Compassion, the Clinical Roundtable in collaboration with UCSD’s Department of Family Medicine continued its evaluation of the Guidelines protocols (which were previously added to the UCSD Health EMR system) on clinical behavior in addressing ADRD. All provider participants in the study have completed their training and are utilizing the tools built into the EMR. Highlights of progress to date were shared at the January 2024 Clinical Roundtable meeting. Preliminary results showed that many provider practices changed after six months of receiving the training and using the tools. For example, the proportion of patients who were eligible for screening and were actually screened increased from 21% at baseline to 53% after six months. This is rather meaningful, since 10% or more of patients who were screened had signs of cognitive impairment.

In 2024, the Clinical Roundtable encouraged its members to submit applications to participate in a significant new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) project. Fortunately, two local health organizations and their partners received notification of award. The project is CMS’s national demonstration project called *Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience* or *GUIDE*. This eight-year project aims to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia, reduce strain on unpaid caregivers, and help people remain in their homes and communities. The GUIDE model uses a new payment model within Medicare Part B (outpatient services) that, instead of using the traditional fee-for-service payment structure for physicians, will use a per-patient-per-month model specifically for dementia care to include outpatient physician visits, 24-hour access to a helpline, care coordination, caregiver education, and \$2,500 of respite care

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per patient/caregiver annually. Participating organizations include The Neurology Center, which will partner with area Federally Qualified Health Centers, and Determined Health, which will partner with San Diego State University.

### **Next Steps for Improving Clinical Care**

Champions for Health will continue to coordinate the work of the Clinical Roundtable in building a more competent workforce by strengthening the knowledge, skills, and abilities of health care professionals who deliver care and services to people with ADRD and their family caregivers. In partnership with the County, Champions for Health will identify and work with two more health systems to integrate dementia screening tools and related clinical practice tools into their EMR systems.

As discussed, this integration supports the sustainability of best practices in clinical care and has the potential to be replicable among other health systems. After ten years of leadership, Michael Lobatz, MD, is stepping down from his role as Chair of the Clinical Roundtable in November 2024 concurrent with his retirement from clinical practice. This marks a time of transition in which the neurologists and other specialists that spearheaded the development of the *Guidelines* will pass the torch to primary care physicians who are carrying on the important work of embedding the best practices into the systems in which they work. The Clinical Roundtable will build even stronger connections between primary care, specialty care, and community services such as caregiver education and respite.



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# CAREGIVER SUPPORT



In the county, epidemiologists estimate that there are up to 290,000 people caring for someone with ADRD (Source: The Alzheimer's Project. (2022). *Annual report 2022*. Alzheimer's Project.). Caring for someone with ADRD can be meaningful and it is often a gesture of great love. However, caregiving can also be extremely difficult and draining. Most people living with dementia are cared for by family members or close friends for the majority of their time with the condition. Even if a person moves into a facility for residential care, loved ones usually continue to play a major role in care and handling aspects of the person's life, such as finances. Due to their significant role, programs that support informal caregivers to provide quality care and to maintain their own wellbeing are especially important. Approximately half of all caregivers are caring for someone with ADRD. The ACL funds the National Family Caregiver Support Program that includes caregiver education, counseling, respite, minor home repair, and legal aid. In the county, these services are overseen by AIS and provided by contracted organizations including Southern Caregiver

Resource Center (SCRC), Jewish Family Service (JFS), and Interfaith Community Services (ICS). Approximately half of the program's clients are individuals caring for someone with ADRD. The Caregiver Coalition of San Diego, coordinated by AIS, brings together service providers such as SCRC, JFS, ICS, Alzheimer's Association of San Diego/Imperial Counties, Alzheimer's San Diego, and others to educate the community.

## Community Engagement

In fall 2023, as part of a larger needs assessment, AIS hosted a series of feedback forums at public sites across the county. A special feedback forum was hosted with JFS for caregivers of individuals enrolled in the JFS Balboa Avenue Older Adult Center program, which is designed for those living with early-stage ADRD. Caregivers had the opportunity to share their experience navigating the current system of care, personally speak to how their needs are being met, and identify any gaps in service delivery. A separate listening session was also hosted for 25 individuals enrolled in the program to give voice to a population that is often not heard in traditional community input events.

The input gathered in the sessions indicated that caregivers value education programs on ADRD issues, the emotional support of groups, and they especially value respite care to take breaks from caregiving. The individuals living with ADRD emphasized that they want to stay engaged in life activities to the fullest extent possible, they don't want to feel isolated, and they want to maintain ties and interactions with supportive people.

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## Fiscal Year 2023-24 Highlights

Through AIS's contracted services and through the efforts of the Caregiver Coalition, more than 3,000 caregivers were served in the last year, with approximately half of these individuals caring for a person with ADRD. As a part of these services, nearly 6,000 hours of respite were provided to caregivers of persons with ADRD. The Caregiver Coalition's offerings included a conference and resource fair with more than 140 participants entitled, "Creating a Game Plan: Strategies for Managing Dementia." Topics included navigating long-term care options, preparing legal documents and insurance plans, and driving safety. The Caregiver Coalition also produced eight webinars which are available at [www.caregivercoalitionsd.org](http://www.caregivercoalitionsd.org).

In November 2023, the City of San Diego hosted a special event in honor of National Caregiver Awareness Month. The event featured a reception and resource fair, providing a one-stop shop for more than 40 attendees to gather caregiving resources and connect with local organizations.

In March 2024, the Caregiver Coalition's Caregiver Handbook was translated into four additional threshold languages (Farsi, Korean, Mandarin, and Somali) and made available to the community in digital and print copy. These editions add to the previously published editions in Arabic, English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The Caregiver Handbook was shared with community partners serving diverse communities, including Somali Family Service and the Union of Pan Asian Communities to promote its widespread dissemination.

In 2017, as part of the Alzheimer's Project and with community stakeholder input, AIS launched the Alzheimer's Response Team



*Attendees listen to a guest speaker at an event for National Caregiver Awareness Month at the City of San Diego Cathy Hopper Friendship.*

(ART), a social work case management program. ART serves as a lifeline for caregivers and families needing support for their loved ones with ADRD. ART services include assessment of needs, coordination of services, client and family education, and advance care planning regarding legal, financial, and care issues. In FY 2023-24, ART served 872 clients.

### Next Steps for Supporting Caregivers

The programs and services described above will continue to serve caregivers, and the Caregiver Coalition is continuing to plan insightful programming, including a focus on dementia. Efforts are being made to ensure all these resources are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and delivered through multiple channels to best reach caregivers of diverse backgrounds.

# PUBLIC AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Inadequate knowledge and understanding of ADRD can have several consequences, from perpetuating stigma to delaying treatment for at-risk older adults. Most people think of ADRD

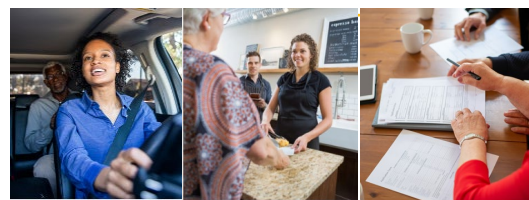


as absolutely devastating. However, some of the difficulties and problems associated with living with ADRD can be mitigated with dementia-friendly communities in which people have the knowledge and skills to interact helpfully with individuals with ADRD. In addition, businesses, community services, and other organizations can offer dementia-friendly environments and support. All communities have been touched by dementia and everyone can have a role in fostering inclusion, support, and belonging for individuals living with ADRD.

The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health community team, co-led by AIS and JFS, brings together individuals and agencies to educate the wider community about brain health, dementia-friendly practices, and resources to support people living with ADRD.

AIS continues to serve as the regional lead for Dementia Friends, a 1-hour, interactive session that aims to change the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. In partnership with the Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team, AIS has provided Dementia Friends sessions to diverse audiences, including Summercrest Senior Apartments and St. Paul's Plaza residents; MJ Housing & Services staff; and Young Professionals Serving Seniors group members. In 2024, Dementia Friends sessions were provided for AIS social workers and other County staff. Additionally, AIS is collaborating with Alzheimer's Los Angeles on a recorded version of the Dementia Friends program, which could be integrated with the County's Learning Management System and would give departments across the County the option to assign this training to staff.

The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team has created a variety of educational and supportive materials, such as the Dementia Friendly Activities Toolkit, a Communication Tip Card, and brochures to educate organizations on how their sector can be dementia-friendly. The team continues to



**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Transportation Providers**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov](https://www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 338-4461

**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Restaurants and Food Establishments**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov](https://www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 338-4461

**Dementia-Friendly Tips and Elder Abuse Prevention for Legal Professionals**

For more resources and information for older adults, visit [www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov](https://www.agewell.sandiegocounty.gov) or call (800) 338-4461



*New brochures detailing dementia-friendly tips and elder abuse prevention.*



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disseminate these materials throughout the community and create new resources as well.

### **Prevention**

A growing area in public health and in the Alzheimer’s Project work is increasing the focus on lowering our risk for ADRD. Research is increasingly showing that what is good for the body is good for the brain. Managing chronic conditions such as hypertension, addressing hearing loss, exercising, and staying socially engaged are key components of a brain healthy lifestyle. The Clinical Roundtable’s efforts have included supporting physicians to share Healthy Brain information with their patients. The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team has also disseminated brain health information to the community.

## **Fiscal Year 2023-24 Highlights**

### **Dementia-Friendly Organizations**

The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team created new brochures on how to be dementia-friendly focusing on four new sectors: restaurants and other food establishments, legal professionals, transportation providers, and healthcare settings. These brochures were shared widely with key stakeholders of these sectors and unveiled publicly at the 2024 American Society on Aging Conference. Visit <https://www.livewellsd.org/dementiafriendly> to access the brochures along with other resources.



*District 5 Supervisor Jim Desmond announcing the launch of the County’s Blue Envelope Program.*



*Lena Huang, Community Engagement Manager for the Alzheimer's Association San Diego/Imperial Chapter, presents at the Take on Alzheimer's event as part of a panel.*

### **Dementia Training**

In spring 2024, AIS trained 269 In-Home Supportive Services social workers and 23 Public Administrator/Public Guardian staff on dementia friendly principles. These trainings provided practical examples of situations that staff may encounter in the field, and how to recognize signs and symptoms of dementia. Efforts by the Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team reached 427 community members with the Dementia Friends sessions. AIS outreach staff educated 175 people on ADRD basics.

### **Blue Envelope Program**

On September 26, 2023 (1), the Board declared San Diego County a Blue Envelope County and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to identify County departments to collaborate with the Sheriff's Department in

the implementation of the Blue Envelope Program. It is led by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department in collaboration with community organizations, and the San Diego County Chiefs' and Sherriff's Association. The program is designed to promote inclusivity and serve as an enhanced communication awareness tool between law enforcement and community members with dementia, autism, or other conditions that might require additional accommodations or awareness during a law enforcement interaction. The program allows an individual to display the Blue Envelope logo or present a Blue Envelope upon contact with law enforcement or other community service personnel. The Blue Envelope materials can contain identification and other helpful information. HHSa and several other community partners contribute to disseminating this resource.

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*Take on Alzheimer's campaign:* In June 2024, CDPH and AIS hosted one of CDPH's three kick-off events for Take on Alzheimer's, a statewide campaign to raise awareness of brain health, signs of Alzheimer's, and the importance of getting screened. The event was hosted in partnership with and held at the Fourth District Seniors Resource Center in Southeastern San Diego. It featured leaders in the field of public health, healthcare, and social services to share resources and discuss health disparities and strategies for the county's multicultural communities facing Alzheimer's. Over 60 community members, professionals, and representatives from partner organizations attended the event.

**Next Steps for Increasing Community Awareness of ADRD**

The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health team is developing a sector-specific training on

dementia-friendly best practices for transportation providers. This training will be provided to the region's primary stakeholders in the transportation industry at the Council on Access and Mobility general meeting in October 2024. The team is developing a similar sector-specific training for banks and financial institutions and has garnered the commitment of one local credit union to prioritize this training for all staff.

San Diego's GWEP received notice of extended funding in June 2024, which will allow UCSD, the County, and other funded organizations to continue educating local healthcare providers, social service agencies, and community organizations on ADRD and best practices.

County epidemiologists are analyzing regional data to develop updated prevalence estimates on ADRD and caregiver burden. This information will be shared with the public in a report in FY 2024-25.



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## CONCLUSION

Over the ten years of The Alzheimer’s Project, the County and community partners have made significant progress in addressing the toll of ADRD. Indeed, the work with healthcare organizations to improve EMR systems is beginning to see real success, with more patients now receiving cognitive evaluations. As described in this report, there has also been extensive training for clinicians on how to address ADRD, including more emphasis on connecting patients and their loved ones with community resources. The Age Well Dementia & Brain Health Team is educating individuals on inclusive practices and has also begun training and providing resources for implementing dementia-friendly practices at the organizational level.

Despite this progress, as the number of older adults continues to rise, the number of people affected by these diseases is also projected to rise. There is still more work to be done to improve clinical care for patients at-risk or diagnosed with ADRD; to expand services and supports available to family caregivers; and to raise awareness and understanding of ADRD in all community sectors. The Alzheimer’s Project partners will continue to advance projects in each of these areas.

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## RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

### **The Alzheimer’s Project**

[www.sdalzheimersproject.org](http://www.sdalzheimersproject.org)

### **Aging Roadmap**

[www.livewellsd.org/agingroadmap](http://www.livewellsd.org/agingroadmap)

### **Clinical Roundtable Materials**

[www.championsforhealth.org/alzheimers](http://www.championsforhealth.org/alzheimers)

### **Data on ADRD in San Diego County**

[www.sdhealthstatistics.com](http://www.sdhealthstatistics.com)

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# FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 PARTNERS

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## ***Clinical Roundtable***

- Michael Lobatz, MD, The Neurology Center, Scripps Health, (Committee Chair)
- Alzheimer’s Association San Diego/Imperial Chapter
- Alzheimer’s San Diego
- Champions for Health (also known as the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation)
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Medical Care Services
- Kaiser Permanente
- Family Health Centers of San Diego
- Palomar Health Medical Group
- Perlman Clinic
- San Diego Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly
- San Diego State University
- San Ysidro Health
- Scripps Health
- Sharp Community Medical Group
- Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group
- Southern California Permanente Medical Group
- Southern Caregiver Resource Center
- The Elizabeth Hospice
- The George G. Glenner Alzheimer’s Family Centers, Inc.
- The Neurology Center of Southern California
- TrueCare
- UC San Diego Health
- UC San Diego Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center
- Vista Community Clinic

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### ***Caregiver Support and Public Awareness & Education Partners***

- 101 Mobility of San Diego
- Aaron Home Care
- AARP
- Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council
- Always Best Care Senior Services
- Alzheimer's Association San Diego/Imperial Chapter
- Alzheimer's San Diego
- Caregiver Coalition of San Diego
- Choose Well San Diego
- City of San Diego Age Well Services
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services
- County of San Diego Sheriff's Office
- Elder Law & Advocacy/Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program
- ElderHelp of San Diego
- For Their Thoughts Foundation
- Foundation for Senior Care
- Gary & Mary West Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly
- IHSS Public Authority
- Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- Meals on Wheels San Diego County
- National Latina Businesswomen Association
- National Alliance on Mental Illness San Diego
- NeuroLab 360
- Parkinson's Association of San Diego
- Parkinson and Other Movement Disorder Center
- San Diego Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research
- San Diego Community College District
- San Diego Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- San Diego Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly
- San Diego State University
- San Diego VA Caregiver Support Program
- Sharp HospiceCare
- Sharp Senior Resource Center
- Southern Caregiver Resource Center
- St. Paul's Senior Services
- The George G. Glenner Alzheimer's Family Centers, Inc.
- Union of Pan Asian Communities
- Wheelchair Dancers Organization

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