



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Commission Meeting



Minutes

Wednesday, April 15th, 2026 | 1:00PM-3:00PM

Carnelian Conference Room, 3725 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa 95403

In-person Attendance: Deanna Shaat, Robin Thompson, Suzanne Edwards, Jenny Helman, Rick Baum, Priyanka Varma, Terry Kelley, Heather Hannan-Kramer, Priyanka Varma, Trayce Beards, Pam Law, Michael Margetts (*Voted onto the Commission during meeting*), Don Streeper (*Emeritus Member-Non-voting*)

Virtual Attendance: Diane Spain, Jaime Penaherrera (*Left meeting at 1:25*)

Absent: Alain Serkissian

Staff Attendance: Paul Dunaway, Cody Souza-Milner, Cassandra Denson (Zoom)

1. Welcome & Commission Member Introductions (Helman) (1:03PM)

2. Approval of the 3.18.2026 Commission Meeting Minutes (Helman)

- Approved as with corrections:
 - Deanna Shaat is not on the Legislative Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Update Priyanka Varma's attendance.

3. Public Comment and Commission Member Open Forum

Introductions provided to public participants who wish to be recognized:

- *In-person attendees who wish to speak may indicate their request to speak during this time. When recognized by the Chair, please state your name and begin your comments.*
- *Virtual participants who wish to speak must use the "Raise Hand" feature located within Zoom. When it is your turn to speak, the host will unmute your microphone and prompt you to speak. Please state your name and begin your comments*

Jamie Escoubas, COA: Jamie provided a Council on Aging (COA) update regarding the "Generations in Motion" Community Walk. They shared concerns about funding reductions impacting the Adult Day Program, Peer Support, and PEARLS programs, and expressed support for continued advocacy from the Commission and broader community to help sustain these critical safety net services.

4. Commission Member (Helman)

New Commission Member Application – Action

The Executive Committee has nominated Michael Margetts (District 4) for election to the Commission. Election requires a majority vote of the Commission members present and voting.

Motion: Elect Michael Margetts to the Commission.

Approved by Commission: 5/20/2026



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1st Motion: Robin Thompson | 2nd: Heather Hanna-Kramer | Vote Result: Passed

Commission-Elected Seat Renewal - **Action**

The Commission will consider and take action on the renewal of Jaime Peñaherrera.

Motion: Re-elect Jaime Peñaherrera to the Commission.

1st Motion: Rick Baum | 2nd Motion: Deanna Shaat | Vote Result: Passed

5. Peer Counselor Discussion (Beards, Edwards)

The Commission will discuss changes in Peer Counselor services in Sonoma County.

- Tuesday, May 19th – Public Comment for the Board of Supervisors regarding Behavioral Health Services funding cuts to Peer Counseling funding.
- Commission will be writing a letter of support for the Board of Supervisors.

6. Legislative Representatives

The Commission will hear from invited legislative representatives to respond to questions from the Commission.

Question 1: *What specific steps has your elected official taken to advance issues related to improving the lives of seniors, people with disabilities, and their caregivers?*

- **Thompson's Office:** Provides casework support to seniors seeking assistance with federal agencies, including the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
- **Rogers' Office:** Hosts town halls at senior centers across five counties to gather direct feedback from constituents. This input has informed the development of multiple pieces of legislation.
- **Connelly's Office:** Engages with seniors through community events such as "Community Coffees" to better understand their needs, while also offering casework support. Successfully advanced AB 456 and AB 806 in 2025. Collaborates closely with local community-based organizations, supports AB 736 (Affordable Housing Bond Act), and partners with the Alzheimer's Association.
- **Aguiar-Curry's Office:** Partners with the Alzheimer's Association and the Office of Congressman Mike Thompson. Hosts Spanish-language town halls to increase accessibility and provides casework assistance to community members.



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Question 2: Please describe any legislation affecting seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers where your elected official is an author or lead sponsor. How can the Aging & Disability Commission support these efforts?

- **Thompson's Office:**

Congressman Thompson is working to advance several pieces of federal legislation impacting older adults and caregivers. This includes the *CONNECT Act*, which expands telehealth access for Medicare beneficiaries, and the *American Affordability Act of 2025*, which addresses housing, education, and healthcare costs, and includes provisions such as a Family Caregivers Tax Credit and adjustments to capital gains taxes for home sales. Additional efforts include the *Lowering Costs for Caregivers Act*, allowing caregivers to use HSAs and FSAs for caregiving-related expenses, as well as proposed tax incentives to increase funding for brain research related to Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and mental health conditions.

Support Opportunity: The Commission can support these efforts by providing formal endorsements of relevant legislation and advocating at the federal level.

- **Rogers' Office:**

Assemblymember Rogers has authored several bills, including AB 1618, which establishes a statewide food insecurity data collection program; AB 1811, which preserves Health Professional Shortage Area designations; and AB 1601, which allows county retirees to negotiate cost-of-living adjustments. These efforts aim to improve access to essential services and financial stability for older adults.

- **Connelly's Office:**

Assemblymember Connelly is leading AB 1790, which addresses the Water's Edge tax loophole. By potentially increasing state revenue, this legislation could help address budget gaps and support funding for programs that benefit seniors and people with disabilities.

- **Aguiar-Curry's Office:**

Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry has introduced AB 1857, which aims to reduce food deserts by expanding grocery store contracting flexibility, and AB 2000, the *Reliable Medication Coverage Act*, which seeks to protect individuals from sudden changes in prescription drug formularies that could disrupt access to necessary medications.

Question 3: How do you coordinate with your colleagues in other legislative bodies on issues of aging and disability (i.e., Congress, State Legislatures, Counties, and Cities)?

- **Thompson's Office:**

Coordinates with federal, state, and local legislative offices, as well as county



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partners, community-based organizations, and service providers. Collaboration across these entities is ongoing, with healthcare identified as a primary focus in the upcoming legislative year.

- **Rogers' Office:**
Maintains open lines of communication with colleagues across jurisdictions, particularly when conducting constituent casework. The office works to better understand systemic barriers impacting older adults and individuals with disabilities, including transportation challenges, as well as limited access to the internet and gaps in technology literacy.
- **Connelly's Office:**
Engages in cross-sector collaboration with other legislative offices and participates in public forums, including panel presentations addressing issues such as the unique challenges of aging among women.
- **Aguiar-Curry's Office:**
Coordinates with other legislative offices to support constituent casework and broader issue resolution. The office also encourages proactive engagement with the Aging & Disability Commission, recommending earlier meetings in the legislative cycle to allow time for review and issuance of letters of support prior to Assembly consideration.

Question 4: *What are your officials doing to help middle or lower-middle-income constituents who may not meet the eligibility requirements for various public programs (based on income, age, health status, etc.) but who nevertheless are facing severe problems in accessing needed services as they age?*

- Responses can be sent to Jenny Helman by the representatives via email. Helman will forward their responses to the Commission members.

Question 5: *How may we as a Commission support the work your officials do to support older adults, their caregivers, and those with disabilities?*

- Thompson, Huffman, Connelly, and Aguiar-Curry Offices:
Encourage ongoing communication with the Commission and recommend sharing community needs and emerging issues, as this input helps shape legislation. Legislative offices also emphasized the importance of timely advocacy. April and May are key months for committee hearings, when letters of support are most impactful. To improve coordination, they recommend meeting with the Commission earlier in the year (e.g., February) to review bills and consider support.



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7. Chair Updates (Helman)

Commission Member Update:

- Eddie Estrada (District 3) has resigned due to work commitments. The Commission intends to offer an exit interview or questionnaire.
- Information regarding remote attendance is available in the agenda packet.

June Planning Day:

- Scheduled for June 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Officer Elections (June):

- Members interested in serving as Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary are encouraged to contact the Committee.
- The Elections Committee will be established at the May Commission meeting.

8. Director Updates (Dunaway)

County Budget

- Budget workshops are scheduled for next week.

State Budget

- Assembly Member Jackson stated that proposals to offset IHSS costs to counties are “dead on arrival.” He also requested that CDA report on senior suicide rates.

SB 1249

- Revises how Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are regulated, allowing counties the option to operate their own AAA instead of designating a nonprofit agency.

BREAK

9. Parkinson’s Society of Sonoma County Presentation

Presentation from the Parkinson’s Society, Jennifer Perez.

- The Parkinson’s Support Group of Sonoma County serves individuals with Parkinson’s disease and their caregivers. Monthly meetings typically include 60–100 attendees. Specialized support groups are available for men, women, care partners, and individuals in the early stages of Parkinson’s.
- The Parkinson’s Vitality Institute offers private personal training designed specifically for individuals with Parkinson’s disease.

Key Needs Identified:

- Ongoing support beyond initial diagnosis
- Increased access to specialized exercise programs
- Expanded support for care partners
- Greater availability of local movement disorder specialists



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- Limited Medicare coverage, with a need for alternative funding options for patients
- Support for AB 2081 and SB 837

10. Recruitment Membership Task Update

Discussion on the progress of the Recruitment Member Task.

- Invite prospective members to upcoming Commission meetings.

11. Board of Supervisors Meeting – Spring 2026

Spring 2026: Meetings with the Supervisors should be completed by May 2026

- D1: Team is in conversation/planning phase
- D2: Meeting May 1st
- D3: Meeting May 7th
- D4: Meeting the candidates for the district on April 16th.
- D5: Completed their meeting. Next meeting scheduled for June.

12. Standing & Ad Hoc Committee Reports (Helman)

Ad Hoc Committees:

- No Wrong Door Ad Hoc - **Action**
Prioritize work plan activities so the plan can be discussed and approved by the Commission.
Lead: Suzanne Edwards
Due: April 9, 2026

Motion: Extend the Ad Hoc to May 7th.

1st Motion: Rick Baum | 2nd Motion: Deanna Shaat | Vote Result: Passed

- Research Report Topic #2 (New) - **Action**
Potentially research and summarize issues related to nutrition programs for older adults and adults with disabilities.
Lead: Diane Spain
Due: June 4, 2026

Motion: Stand up an Ad Hoc for Research Topic #2.

1st Motion: Terry Kelley | 2nd Motion: Robin Thompson | Vote Result: Passed

- Interested Members: Deanna Shaat, Terry Kelley, Robin Thompson, Michael Margetts

13. Adjourn (Helman)(**2:42PM**)



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Supplemental materials related to an agenda item are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Adult & Aging Office, 3725 Westwind Blvd., Suite 101, Santa Rosa. All listed times are approximate and subject to change. Agenda items are scheduled for consideration by the Aging & Disability Commission, which may or may not choose to act. Breaks may be called at the discretion of the Chair. If you need any accommodations to effectively participate, please contact aaa@schsd.org or (707) 565-5238 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

To submit items for the AAA Newsletter, or to receive the AAA Newsletter: AAA@schsd.org

Upcoming Events:

- Executive Meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 2026, from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- Commission Meeting: Wednesday, May 20, 2026, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- Commission Planning Day has moved to June 17, 2026 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- North County Senior Resource Fair: June 7, 2026, from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
 - At Huerta Gym, Windsor
- African Soul Festival: August 29, 2026, from 11:00 to 5:00PM
 - 475 City Center Drive, Rohnert Park

Upcoming ADRU Table Events:

- None at this time