

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION NEEDED
Member Attendees	1. Triana Abel Encarnacion, Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and Aging 2. Rose Anderson, Larkin University 3. Joe H. Baldelomar, Alzheimer's Association 4. Elizabeth Bezos, MD Senior Placement 5. Daniel Brady, Brady and Associates 6. Evelyn Capdevila, Quality Physical Therapy 7. Marla Cocalis, StudentsCare - <i>Presenter</i> 8. Rob Collins, The Miami Foundation 9. Olivia DeCastro, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 10. Jennifer De Gruccio, Parkinson's Foundation 11. Gordon M. Dickinson, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine 12. Nattalia Earle, Urban Health Partnerships – <i>Vice-Chair</i> 13. Mariangelli "Angie" Fernandez, Miami-Dade State Attorney Office 14. Frances Garcia, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue 15. Mayra Garcia, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 16. Vanessa Garcia Azzam, Miami-Dade County 17. Natalie Gray, Western Atlantic University School of Medicine 18. Ricardo Maldonado, Total Life 19. Lina Menendez, Epilepsy Alliance Florida 20. Dennise Nicola, PACE/Miami Jewish Health – <i>Chair</i> 21. Anna Oirik, Right at Home Miami Lakes 22. Ana Lucia Ortega Encarnacion, Latin and American US Foundation 23. Carmen Ramos-Watson, B/Adaptable 24. Louisenie Remy, Jackson Health Roxcy Bolton Rape Treatment Center 25. Lillian Rey, Alliance for Aging 26. Kathleen Sarmiento, Alliance for Aging, Inc. 27. Natalia Shtompel, Barry University School of Social Work 28. Angelique Suarez, Senior Tech Connect 29. Lily Suazo, Jewish Community Services of South Florida	

	30. Laurie Varona, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 31. Melody Velez, United Healthcare 32. Marjorie York, Community Action Agency (via phone call)	
Welcome and Introductions	Chair, Dennise Nicola welcomed everyone and started the meeting at 2:02 p.m.. General meeting guidelines were provided for the attendees by Dennise N. and Vice-Chair, Nattaliah Earle assisted with the agenda. Attendee introductions were done during <i>Partner Updates</i>, and virtual attendees were encouraged to put their contact information and any organizational updates/announcements in the chat. The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Team.	
Review and Approval of Minutes	The minutes from the last meeting on June 30, 2026, were reviewed by the Committee members in attendance. A motion was made to approve the minutes by Marjorie Y. and seconded by Angie F. The minutes were approved unanimously without corrections.	
Previous Action Items(s)	• By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will have a minimum of four presentations per year on key health topics for older adults including best practices, model programs, and services for this population and/or their caregivers. (Access to Care, activity #1, page 1) • By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will increase education on common chronic disease conditions in older adults (e.g., hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart disease, COPD, and asthma). (Chronic Disease Prevention, activity #9, page 3) • By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will host and/or support social activity/event(s) for older adults at senior living facility(s) or other gathering sites (e.g., meal sites). (Mental Health, activity #12, page 4)	Action Item(s): • Continue to plan hosted and/or supported... social activity/event(s) for older adults at senior living facility(s) or other gathering sites (e.g., meal sites). (Mental Health, activity #12, page 4)

Executive Board (EB) Update	Vice-Chair, Nattaliah E. provided the updates from the last EB meeting held on 7/13/2026, including: • The Board continues the conversation on optimal health and addressing the drivers of health. • Updates were shared regarding important legislative updates, and the Board reviewed the potential impacts along with potential solutions. • Updates to the Consortium website are currently on hold due to the transition of the webmaster from the agency. • DOH-Miami-Dade has received updated directives from the state and is currently navigating some of the changes during the new fiscal year.	
Legislative Report	Vice-Chair, Nattaliah E. provided legislative updates related to older adult population, and invited others to share their own updates and/or impacts to their organizations. Discussion included the potential impact of legislature regarding property tax reduction which could in turn impact funding of public services (e.g., parks, STS transportation, home care services, etc.), as well as, changes to SNAP benefits.	
Presentation: <i>When College Meets Community: The Power of Unlikely Friendships</i>	EIC partner and member, Marla Cocalis, MSW, M.Ed., Program Manager, StudentsCare, gave a 15-minute presentation, <i>When College Meets Community: The Power of Unlikely Friendships</i>. The presentation highlighted StudentsCare Senior Buddy Program which fosters meaningful intergenerational connections between college students and older adults in residential facilities and community centers. This program helps reduce social isolation and loneliness, improves resident satisfaction, mental health, and overall wellbeing by bringing companionship, connection, and joy to older adults experiencing isolation. StudentsCare's college/university chapters operate as a club with a student leadership team that provides them with management experience. Our program manager works directly with the campus to establish and support this structure. The Senior Buddy Program builds mutually beneficial relationships between generations. Stories shared from actual program connections were shared. With	Action Item(s): • Email your suggestion(s) for future Elder Issues Committee meeting presentations to: DNicola@miamijewishhealth.org, Nattaliah@urbanhp.org, & Mayra.Garcia@flhealth.gov.

	the consent of the presenter, a follow-up email was sent to all EIC members after the meeting on 7/28/26 with the presenter's contact information, presentation slides, and list of their current school chapters and senior sites in Miami.	
Performance Measures in Need of Improvement (Work Plan Review)	Today's presentation by Marla Cocalis, MSW, M.Ed., Program Manager, StudentsCare, will be reported towards the following work plan activity(s): • By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will have a minimum of four presentations per year on key health topics for older adults including best practices, model programs, and services for this population and/or their caregivers. (Access to Care, activity #1, page 1) • By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will increase education on mental health conditions for older adults such as...loneliness and/or social isolation (Behavioral and Mental Health, activity #11, page 4) Chair Dennise N. also led follow-up discussion on the following measure to plan a social activity/event for older adults: • By September 30, 2030, the Elder Issues Committee will host and/or support social activity/event(s) for older adults at senior living facility(s) or other gathering sites (e.g., meal sites). (Mental Health, activity #12, page 4) These were the suggestions discussed at today's meeting on July 28, 2026: • The following two events are confirmed: ○ Wed. Sept. 23, 2026, at South Miami Senior Center (congregate meal site), set-up 10:30 AM, event time 11 AM to 12 PM. ○ Thurs. Oct. 22, 2026, at North Miami Beach Library, set-up 9:30 AM, event time 10 AM to 11 AM. • Plans include having a fun, engaging activity for the seniors already gathered at the facilities identified (e.g., educational bingo); give away	

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	prizes for the seniors donated by partner organizations; have one resource table where participating organizations can place their information for older adults to self-access. • Dennise N. sent targeted emails to EIC members who had expressed interest and/or suggested activities for the social events during previous meetings or via follow-up email. • Dennise N. will draft a recap after today's meeting to send to all EIC members for any other suggestions and/or volunteers to participate. • Angelique Suarez, Senior Tech Connect, shared in the chat that they can participate in person and <i>do a Tech Bingo class and bring prizes for seniors.</i> The following additional suggestions were discussed at previous EIC meetings: June 30, 2026 • Karaoke activity • Music and movement activity suggested by Rose A. • Coffee and Doughnut Social, Ice Cream Social, ESL classes to bring engagement suggested by Fabimaelsie J. • Angelique Suarez with Senior Tech Connect offered a class on digital scam prevention and scams targeting seniors. • Lilliana Rey, SMP Specialist, Alliance for Aging, offered to do a presentation on Medicare Fraud; contact: reyl@allianceforaging.org; phone 305-670-6500, x11268. • Rebecca C. of WellMed Charitable Foundation offered her senior site location for future events • Sheila Gutierrez offered possible Vizcaya membership giveaway, and said she could facilitate an sensory experience on a garden topic (e.g., make an herbal tea bag) May 26, 2026	
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- Nattaliah provided updates that the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative Wellness Day at Oak Grove Park on Sunday, June 28, 2026, from 8AM to 3PM (TBA), has sufficient community partners committed to participate at the event, however, EIC could support by helping promote the event for older adults and their families.
- Dennise encouraged members to put their name & organization in the chat if they would like to be part of an EIC hosted and/or support social activity/event(s) for older adults at senior living facility(s) or other gathering sites. The following six members expressed interest during the meeting in the chat:
- Lymari Rivera, Mount Sinai Eldercare PACE, lymari.rivera@msmc.com.
- Sheila Gutierrez, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, sheila.gutierrez@vizcaya.org.
- Martine Charles, Alliance for Aging, charlesm@allianceforaging.org.
- Mariangelli (Angie) Fernandez, State Attorney's Office, fernang@MiamiSAO.com.
- Lissette Becerra (guest, not a registered member), SurfMed, lbecerra@surfmed.com.
- Blanca Ceballos, United HomeCare, bceballos@unitedhomecare.com; can support with information for seniors and their family caregivers regarding the GUIDE and ADI programs.
- Rose Anderson, Larkin University, randerson@larkin.edu emailed her interest in becoming "more involved in future initiatives and community activities that support older adults and caregivers."
- Dennise suggested sending a list of potential places where we could host such an event so the interested members can choose.

April 28, 2026

- Cristina Brito with the United Way of Miami, and Co-Chair of the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade (Consortium) suggested the EIC

	could support an event being organized by Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative for a Wellness Day at Oak Grove Park on Sunday, June 28, 2026, from 8AM to 3PM (TBA), along with support of Food & Nutrition for All and the Consortium Executive Board. The event will feature a food giveaway, and partner organizations could promote their programs and services via tabling. It was agreed that this event would be an effective way to provide some type of social activity for older adults already gathered in one location. - Jennifer DeGruccio said the Parkinson's Foundation would be <i>happy to help promote and participate</i> this event and could <i>do an exercise demo or a morning stretch</i>. Suggested <i>each vendor should be asked to donate a gift card, so it helps you have raffle items</i>. - Dennise suggested drafting a survey to email to EIC member listserv to collect ideas and sponsor organizations to help with food, volunteers, raffle prizes, etc. March 31, 2026 - Host event(s) at - County's congregate meal sites at Senior Centers (Susan H., NAMI Miami-Dade County). - Arcola Lakes Senior Center, 8401 NW 14 Ave, Miami, FL 33147, operated by MDPROS (Nattaliah E., UHP). - Miami Lakes City Hall (Anna O., Right at Home Miami Lakes); provided contact: Rosario Navarro, 786-417-5996, Rrass89@aol.com. - Sculpture Garden for older adults in partnership with Miami Design District could host; they have activities, like yoga & art in the park, or partner presentations; English, Spanish & Haitian Creole (Carmen Ramos-Watson B/Adaptable). - Possible activities suggested:	
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	○ Presentations on Medicare Fraud Prevention by Lilliana Rey, Alliance for Aging; could host a raffle for a few seniors of promotional items. ○ Miami Dementia Care & Cure Initiative Taskforce is hosting a 1-hour Memory Café at Aventura Branch of MDPLS in May; Alliance would like to participate in planning (Martine Charles, Alliance for Aging). ○ Updates on vaccines & any aspect of vaccination by Gordon M. Dickenson, M.D., UM School of Medicine.	
Recognition of Improved Performance	● 26 total attendees at virtual monthly meeting on June 30, 2026 ● <i>Building Brain-Healthy Habits</i> presentation by Joe H. Baldelomar, Psy.M., Alzheimer's Association Southeast Florida Chapter at the monthly meeting in June	
Reminders	● Next monthly meeting will be in-person on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 2:00-3:30 p.m. to be hosted at the Alliance for Aging in Doral. ● Remaining 2026 monthly meetings: ○ Virtual meeting on Tues., September 29 at 2 p.m. ○ Virtual meeting on Tues., October 27 at 2 p.m. ○ November and December meetings to be cancelled ● Join the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade online at www.healthymiamidade.org/membership, and/or share this invite with others who may be interested in participating.	Action Item(s): ● The Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade is a collaboration between the Florida Department of Health and community partners/organizations promoting health in Miami-Dade County; register to become a member for free online: https://www.healthymiamidade.org/membership/.
Partner Updates	● Presenter: Marla Cocalis, MSW, M.Ed., Program Manager, StudentsCare, Marla@students-care.org, 773-573-7328, www.students-care.org/. ● Triana Abel, Project Manager, Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and Aging. ● Rose Anderson, Assistant Professor and Community Outreach Director, Larkin University, randerson@larkin.edu, 754-777-2642.	Action Item(s): ● EIC members who are subject matter specialists in healthy lifestyles and health promoting topics for older

- Joe H. Baldelomar, Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org/sefl.
- Elizabeth Bezos, Chief Administrative Officer, MD Senior Placement Solutions, elizabeth@mdseniorplacement.com.
- Daniel Brady, Brady and Associates.
- Evelyn Capdevila, PT, MPT, Physical Therapist, Quality Physical Therapy; admin@quality-pt.com.
- Rob Collins, The Miami Foundation, 305-357-2088, rcollins@miamifoundation.org.
- Olivia DeCastro CCHW, CTTS, Health Services Representative, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, Office of Community Health and Planning, olivia.decastro@flhealth.gov, 786-732-8860.
- Jennifer De Gruccio, Community Education & Outreach, Parkinson's Foundation, www.parkinson.org/florida, jdegruccio@parkinson.org.
- Gordon Dickinson, MD, Professor Emeritus-Medicine, UM and WOC staff at Miami VA Medical Center, Gdickins@miami.edu; advocating for preventive health with vaccination and willing to speak to small groups; I am part of an NGO that re-vitalizing the immunization coalition of M-Dade, 786-382-6919.
- Nattaliah Earle, Collective Impact Manager, Urban Health Partnerships (UHP), nattaliah@urbanhp.org, 786-412-0469.
- Angie Fernandez, PIO Community Outreach, Office of the State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, www.miamisao.com, 305-547-0724.
- Frances Garcia, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Dept., Community Assistance/Elder Links Coordinator; garciaf@miamidade.gov.
- Mayra Garcia, Community Liaison for the Elder Issues Committee (EIC)/Senior Community Health Nursing Supervisor, Office of Community Health & Planning, FL Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, Mayra.Garcia@FLHealth.gov; shared Florida Health flyers in chat on Cyclosporiasis and Drowning prevention.

adult population are asked to volunteer to submit written article and/or social media postings for 2026 calendar year; please confirm your interest, topic suggestions via email to liaison: Mayra.Garcia@FLHealth.gov.

Written submissions are *due by 15th of month prior to publish month.*

- Vanessa Garcia Azzam, Program Director, Miami-Dade County Elder Affairs Advisory Board; vanessa.azzam@miamidade.gov.
- Natalie Gray, Pharm.D., Western Atlantic University School of Medicine, NGray@wausm.education, 214-532-2713.
- Ricardo Maldonado, Total Life, behavioral health services for individuals in Medicare (virtual or by phone), national; www.totallife.com; connect at ricardo@totalife.com; shared the link <https://nhcoa.org/> pending intro by email.
- Lina Menendez, Community Resource Specialist, Epilepsy Alliance Florida, LMenendez@eafla.org.
- Dennise Nicola, Director of Business Development, FL PACE Centers at Miami Jewish Health; DNicola@miamijewishhealth.org; shared the link to online resource, "[Understanding the November Property Tax Amendment](#)."
- Anna Oirik, owner of Right at Home agency for personal care located in miami lakes; <https://www.rightathome.net/miami-lakes>.
- Ana Lucia Ortega Encarnacion, CEO, Latin and American US Foundation, Latinandamericanusafoundation@gmail.com; shared multiple questions for potential connections, collaborations and sources of funding (addressed via follow-up phone call on 7/29/26 by Mayra Garcia, EIC community liaison).
- Carmen Ramos-Watson, B/Adaptable and the Sculpture Garden, carmen@b-adaptable.com, 202-413-8899.
- Louisenie Remy, Roxcy Bolton Rape Treatment Center, Louisenie.remy@jhsMiami.org; call the Helpline for more information: 24/7 Helpline: 305-585-RAPE (7273).
- Lilliana Rey, Senior Medicare Patrol Specialist, SHINE, 305-786-1947, 305-670-6500 x11268, ReyL@AllianceForAging.org.
- Kathy Sarmiento, Alliance for Aging SHINE Medicare Counseling/Senior Medicare Patrol Liaison; 305-606-8382, sarmientok@allianceforaging.org; 305-671-6356; SHINE Counseling Sites: <https://www.floridashine.org/Counseling-Sites/Dade.aspx>.

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	• Natalia Shtompel, PhD, LCSW, faculty and program director, Barry University Social Work Dept., nshtompel@barry.edu. • Angelique Suarez, Senior Tech Connect-Digital Literacy Training for elder adults, Asuarez@srtechconnect.com, www.srtechconnect.com. • Lily Suazo, Program Administrator, JCS • Laurie Varona, Tobacco Prevention Program, Florida Department of Health Miami-Dade County, Laurie.Varona@flhealth.gov. • Melody Velez, United Healthcare, Melody.Velez@uhc.com, 786-299-1411. • Marjorie York, Community Action Agency.	
Adjournment	Chair, Dennise N. adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m..	
Next Meeting	The next Elder Issues Committee meeting is planned as an in-person hybrid (with virtual join meeting option) on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, 2:00-3:30 p.m. to be hosted at Alliance for Aging in Doral located at 760 NW 107th Ave.	