



## **NHAHA Quarterly Meeting**

September 18, 2025

9:00am – 11:30am

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping**

***Presenters: Jennifer Rabalais, Co-Director, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living & Coordinator, NHAHA***

***Dick Chevrefils, NHAHA Steering Committee Chair***

Jennifer welcomed everyone to the New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging (NHAHA) September Quarterly Meeting and underscored the power of working together. Dick added that as we share, learn, and grow together, we become a stronger voice on behalf of an aging population. And with mention of the current challenges we face, Dick thanked everyone for being a part of NHAHA and for their efforts in supporting older adults.

Jennifer also announced Sylvia von Aulock, NHAHA Steering Committee member and Transportation Workgroup member, as NHAHA's new Steering Committee Vice Chair. Sylvia brings deep experience with the Southern NH Planning Commission, including work on age-friendly communities development, to this new role.

#### **Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults (slides 5-24)**

***Presenters: Carole Totzkay, Public Health Emergency Planner, Bureau of Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery***

***Damian Santana, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Capital Area Public Health***

With September being National Preparedness Month, Carole and Damian provided timely information on how to support older adults during times of emergency.

#### **Community Resiliency**

Carole defined community resiliency as a measure of how well a community can rebound from a disaster or crisis, which is the basis for developing better preparatory strategies. Carole also mentioned that availability of resources through [ReadyNH](#) and Unite Way's [United We Prepare](#), including information on creating readiness plans. Key components of emergency preparedness includes establishing primary contacts, identifying sources of information for local alerts and warnings, identifying key needs (e.g., oxygen, food stores, water), identifying key documents and creating digital copies, and identifying a support network for yourself and those you take care of.

### Q&A

Q: How can we help those that have mobility issues, are homebound, or living on their own?

A: Contact the local Emergency Management Director. Also, [NH Citizen Assistance Registry for Emergency Services \(CARES\)](#) is a program that allows individuals to register specific medical conditions or special needs under their phone number for use by emergency responders.

- As some police departments have their own local registry, it was suggested noting any preexisting information with a local police department when completing the NH CARES form.

Q: Could you provide information about the mass emergency feeding taskforce?

A: Alongside Jon Eriquezzo and others, emergency feeding support services are being created as part of mass care emergency assistance across NH.

Jennifer confirmed that resources mentioned during the presentation and discussion will be made available at the December NHAHA Quarterly Meeting.

### Capital Area Public Health Network and the NH Public Health Networks

Damian reviewed the role of public health networks in supporting public health in NH and emergency preparedness for older adults. Under DHHS, The NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services and the NH Division of Public Health Services developed the thirteen regional public health networks (RPHNs) to facilitate programmatic activities across NH. Each RPHN has a Public Health Advisory Council. And each council creates a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which identifies public health priority areas specific to the region and how to address them.

### Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Older Adults

The RPHNs work with community partners and emergency response teams, including Community Emergency Response Teams and the Medical Reserve Corps to respond to emergencies and threats in their region. They also work with local coalitions and create partnerships for regional public health support. Furthermore, the newly formed Capital Area Healthy Aging Coalition focuses on accomplishing the goals identified in the CHIP that are specific to supporting older adults to age healthfully and determine how to better connect individuals to resources.

### Q&A

Q: How does one become more involved in the coalition?

A: Contact Melissa Lee for more information.

Q: How are the barriers faced by diverse populations being addressed in the coalition?

A: The coalition consists of diverse, cross-functional representatives and invites anyone who has a focus on the wellbeing of all older adults.

Q: What can we do to educate and provide information to others?

A: Everyone is encouraged to share the resources that are available through the public health networks. Volunteers are also trained to bring resources to older adults through community outreach.

**Brightspot: NH Oral Health Coalition**

***Presenter: Gail Brown, Executive Director, NH Oral Health Coalition***

Gail explained that the NH Oral Health Coalition focuses on advancing oral health statewide and across the lifespan. The coalition serves to connect individuals, support programming, and gather and disseminate data. Through public policy and messaging, the coalition brings awareness to what dental disease is, its cause, and its impact on overall health. Dental disease is associated with heart disease, respiratory disease, dementia, diabetes, and more. Barriers to dental service include cost and lack of accessibility, including lack of services/rurality, lack of transportation, and mobility issues.

Gail provided information on public access dental programs and providers in NH and also highlighted the work of the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire to create a virtual, free [oral health professional training course](#) to enhance professionals' ability to provide disability-competent care.

**NHAHA Updates (slides 27-32)**

***Presenter: Jennifer Rabalais, Co-Director, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living & Coordinator, NHAHA***

- **Networking-only event:** in response to feedback provided by NHAHA Quarterly Meeting attendees to have an event focused on peer networking, NHAHA is currently planning for an in-person, networking-only event. A save the date will be sent out later this year.
- **Direct Care Workforce Workgroup:** the workgroup will be hosting its second annual Direct Care Worker Retreat on October 29 to celebrate and honor direct care workers across NH. The event will include guest speakers, professional development activities, and networking. Please share the [event flyer](#) with direct care workers you know.
- **Transportation Workgroup:** the workgroup will be hosting a Volunteer Driver Program Peer to Peer Network Conference this fall. NHAHA developed the VDP Initiative during the pandemic, in response to the growing need for local transportation options and has continued to highlight the important role of VDPs across NH. The conference will provide VDPs with statewide driver recruitment support and create peer-to-peer opportunities for VDP coordinators this October.
- **NHAHA website:** work over the last few months to update the NHAHA website is soon concluding. Updates will include modernizing the design, improving accessibility, and providing additional space to share resources and information. The launch is set to be shared at the December Quarterly Meeting.

- **NHAHA Annual Participant Survey:** Jennifer highlighted the importance for all NHAHA participants to provide their feedback through the coming annual survey so that NHAHA can continue to improve. Look out for the survey later this year.
- **10-Year Anniversary:** NHAHA will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary in 2026. Look out for communications and events related to this in the future.

### **New Futures NHAHA Advocacy Update (slides 33-44)**

***Presenter: Judith Jones, Policy Coordinator of Healthy Aging, New Futures***

Judith provided an update on the healthy-aging related legislation of the previous session and highlighted the current priorities for 2026.

#### Looking Back: Priority Legislation 2025

##### Proactive:

1. Medicare Savings Programs: enhances eligibility for Medicaid programs called Medicare Savings Programs. While the bill did not pass, it provided a chance for education on the importance of the program.
2. Caregiver Respite and Senior Volunteer Programs: The Senate retained an additional \$100,000 for the Caregiver Respite program. Caregivers and others provided impactful testimony on the importance of these programs.

##### Defensive:

1. Landlord tenant Leasing agreements: Partnered with NH Legal Assistance to oppose.
2. Commission on Aging (COA): defended the retention of funding to the COA.

#### Looking Forward: 2026 Session Priorities

- Medicare Savings Programs
- Caregiver support
  - Counseling & training for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) caregivers
  - Kinship care childcare scholarships

#### Q&A

Q: Has any work been done to connect with the prison system as it related to advocacy for grandparents caring for children of incarcerated parents.

A: Currently outreach has not been expanded beyond direct caregiver family members and coordinators that help navigate benefits. Judith suggested connecting with New Futures for any pertinent contacts or discussions.

Q: Is there any data on the impact on the lack of caregivers, including the economic impact?

A: There is national AARP data, but Judith explained that they look to those in the room to help support the message and make the issue real in the eyes of NH's legislators.

To sign up for the New Futures Health Aging Policy e-newsletter visit: <https://new-futures.org/sign-up>

**NH Alliance for Healthy Aging 2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:**

Thursday, December 11, 2025 @ 9:00 AM

Held in-person at Northeast Delta Dental, 2 Delta Drive (Building Two), Concord, NH