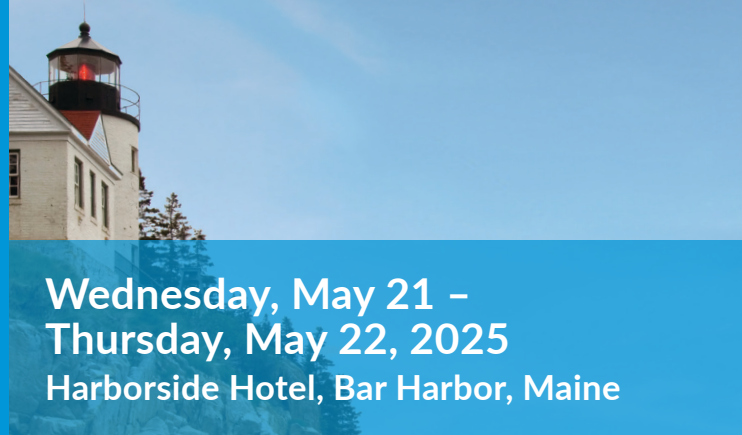


# 32nd Annual Maine Geriatrics Conference

Where Policy Meets Practice



Wednesday, May 21 –  
Thursday, May 22, 2025  
Harborside Hotel, Bar Harbor, Maine

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025

- 8 a.m. Opening Session and Welcome**  
*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., M.A., Chair, Maine Geriatrics Conference Planning Committee and Gwendolyn Mahon, Ph.D., Provost, University of New England*
- 8:30 a.m. The Second Fifty: Answers to the 7 Big Questions of Midlife and Beyond**  
*Debra Whitman, Ph.D., Chief Policy Officer, AARP*  
This keynote will engage the audience as this topic is informed by Whitman's unmatched expertise and deep passion. The Second Fifty is an indispensable guide for living well in the 21st century.
- 9:45 a.m. BREAK: Exhibit Hall Open**
- 10:15 a.m. Workshops Session A**
- A1. Fireside Chat with Debra Whitman**  
*Debra Whitman, Ph.D., Chief Policy Officer, AARP*  
This Fireside Chat provides an opportunity for an open and dynamic discussion that may expand the topic from the morning keynote, including insights from her work nationally and possibly globally, and/or explore areas Whitman has focused on to support aging and older adults. The chat may take many directions depending on the interests of the participants and Whitman.
- A2. Empowering Older Adults: Reducing Isolation Through Accessible Community Services**  
*Chris Street, Nutrition Services Director, Eastern Area Agency on Aging; Betsy Sawyer-Manter, M.S.W., CEO, SeniorsPlus; Megan Walton, MBA, CEO, Southern Maine Agency on Aging*  
This presentation addresses the critical issue of social isolation and limited access to essential services for older adults. We will explore the barriers that prevent them from engaging fully in their communities and receiving necessary support. Through real-world examples and evidence-based strategies, we'll highlight innovative approaches to enhance accessibility and foster social connections, including technology solutions, community outreach, and inclusive service design. Attendees will gain

practical insights on implementing effective, compassionate strategies in their organizations to improve quality of life and promote active engagement for older adults.

### **A3. Active and Empathic Listening: The 'Matters Most' in Age Friendly Health Care**

*Elizabeth Peavey, B.A. Communications Consultant; Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D. M.A., Professor and Director, Geriatrics Education and Research, University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNE COM)*

Listening is critical in the health care profession, and active listening is a skill that can be cultivated and practiced. Yet, despite our best intentions, in our harried lives, it's easy to jump ahead, assume what will be said, and/or offer a solution before getting the whole story/picture. It can leave a person feeling unheard, unseen, and devalued – especially older adults who may already be battling these feelings. In this interactive workshop, we'll look at what it means to be an active and empathic listener, learn techniques and tools to help slow down our solution-driven listening, and test and improve our ability to be our best, present, and tuned-in selves.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025 (CONTINUED)

### **A4. Building Bridges, Breaking Stigma: Social Justice and Dementia-Inclusive Communities**

*Patricia Oh, Ph.D., M.S.W., Assistant Director, Community Innovation and Research, University of Maine Center on Aging; Susan Wehry, M.D., Director, AgingME, UNE COM*

People living with dementia face widespread stigma and systemic barriers to living well in the community. We spotlight the need to shift from a disease-focused model to one that champions dignity, equity, and full community participation. Drawing from real-world initiatives, we share insights from two projects: creating inclusive social dining opportunities and developing emergency and disaster preparedness strategies — both shaped by people living with dementia. During small group discussions, attendees will explore how they can apply dementia-inclusive practices in their community, neighborhood, and workplace.

**11:30 a.m. LUNCH: Exhibit Hall Open**  
**Networking Lunch Tables**  
**Lunch Sponsor: UnitedHealthCare**

**12:45 p.m. Plenary Presentation**  
**Dementia without Loneliness**  
*Michael Verde, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate, President, Memory Bridge*

There is a difference between Alzheimer's disease and the dis-ease of Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's disease is a biological condition. It occurs in the brain. It involves the death of brain cells. The dis-ease of Alzheimer's, however, is the emotional isolation that many people with dementia and their loved ones experience when "normal" communication breaks down. Emotional isolation produces loneliness, anxiety, and depression. It intensifies feelings of sadness, grief, guilt, shame, paranoia, and helplessness. Emotional isolation is even a risk factor for dementia, and research indicates it increases the risk of dementia by 40%. In this plenary presentation, gain a foundational understanding of ending emotional isolation to aid in eliminating significant suffering.

**1:45 p.m. Plenary Presentation**  
**Leadership in Aging: No Limits**  
*Alice Bonner, Ph.D., NP, Chair, Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition, Institute for Healthcare Improvement*

This presentation will review basic leadership principles, including how to create and promote non-hierarchical teams, effective communication, valuing each person on the team, engaging older adults (patients, residents), and involving paid and non-paid care partners and direct care workers. National initiatives designed to build momentum will be shared, such as age-friendly health systems and communities, the Moving Forward Coalition, and others. Recommendations for how to establish or build on existing programs will be presented using a strengths-based approach.

**2:45 p.m. BREAK: Dessert and Exhibit Hall Open**

**3:15 p.m. Workshops Session B**  
**B1. Fireside Chat with Michael Verde and a Meaningful Dive into Memory Bridge**  
*Michael Verde, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate, President, Memory Bridge*

In this fireside chat with Michael Verde, there is an excellent opportunity for open discussion on the topic from his plenary address: picking up on points about his work with Memory Bridge and working with people with dementia. As the plenary session doesn't allow time for a deeper dive into these topics, you can bring your thoughts, reactions, questions, and wonderments to this chat. Actually, this chat may take many directions depending on the area the participants and speakers want to explore!

**B2. 3iHome Affordable & Technology Driven Independent Living Options in Maine: The Future is Now**

*Paul Linet, J.D., Founder and CEO, 3i Housing of Maine*

3i HoME is a Maine based nonprofit with a mission to develop supportive affordable housing for households with a family member living with a disability. Through strong partnerships, 3i HoME is focused on promoting Independent living through the use of Innovative smart home assistive technology in Integrated home and community-based settings. The presentation will address the housing crisis facing people with disabilities, the direct care workforce crisis, and the opportunities to enhance the quality of life for people with complex needs while saving the health care system precious resources by adopting the 3i HoME model.

**Repeated on Thursday, May 22, in Session D3**

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025 (CONTINUED)

### **B3. Harnessing our Power in Aging (MCOA)**

*Maureen O'Connor, M.A., Project Director, and Valerie Jackson, B.S., Facilitation Specialist, Power in Aging, Maine Council on Aging*

Mainers are living healthier, more productive lives than ever before, but our narratives about aging haven't kept pace. From the language we use to how we plan our communities and design our systems, we need to be intentional about seeing our own age bias and understanding how it impacts our friends, family, co-workers, customers, work environment, and even our systems. This interactive presentation explores how ageism impacts us, our health, and our economy and what we can do to build a more age-positive culture in Maine.

### **B4. Fireside Chat with Alice Bonner: Nursing Home Quality Improvement and Other Topics**

*Alice Bonner, Ph.D., NP, Chair, Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition, Institute for Healthcare Improvement*

In this Fireside Chat, attendees can dive deep into nursing home quality improvement or other topics associated with aging with Bonner. She will engage audience members in discussion and small group activities. Expect a spirited and informative dialogue that is sure to be provocative and informative.

support healthier lifestyles. We will review novel, evidence-based strategies that promote brain plasticity, such as lifelong learning and mindfulness meditation. We will also address common barriers to adopting and maintaining these habits by offering evidence-based solutions to overcome challenges and discussing ways to build social connections with those who may be socially isolated.

### **9:15 a.m. Advancing Policy for Older Mainers: Maine State DHHS/OADS Updates**

*Karen Mason, Associate Director, Aging and Long-Term Services & Supports, Office of Aging and Disability Services, Maine*

In this presentation, Mason will discuss priority placed by the Mills Administration on aging policy, the Cabinet on Aging work, and the Department of Health and Human Services plans to improve health and long-term services and supports for older Mainers.

### **10 a.m. BREAK: Exhibit Hall Open**

### **10:30 a.m. Workshops Session C**

#### **C1. Fireside Chat: Addressing Disparities and Challenges in Healthy Brain Aging**

*Rebecca K. MacAulay, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Maine Department of Psychology*

This Fireside Chat provides an opportunity for attendees to engage and discuss topics related to the aging brain and related areas of interest. The conversation will expand on the plenary content to discuss practical solutions to overcome barriers in reducing the risk of cognitive decline.

#### **C2. Moving Maine Forward: The Role of Governor's Cabinet on Aging**

*Elizabeth Gattine, J.D., Senior Policy Advisor and Cabinet on Aging Coordinator, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future*

This session will provide an overview of the role of the Governor's Cabinet on Aging in elevating the voices of older adults and in promoting policies that help us age safely, affordably, and in settings that meet our needs and preferences. Gattine will provide information on the cabinet's priorities, activities, and planning across state government and with community partners. Attendees will discuss their vision for an age-positive state and how the cabinet can support these goals.

## THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

### **8 a.m. Welcome and Announcements**

*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., M.A., Chair, Maine Geriatrics Conference Planning Committee*

### **8:15 a.m. Dr. Dennis McCullough Memorial Lecture Healthy Brain Aging: The Value of Cognitive and Social Activity - HRSA GRANT SESSION**

*All attendees*

*Rebecca K. MacAulay, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Maine Department of Psychology*

This presentation explores the science behind healthy brain aging and well-being, emphasizing the crucial role of cognitive engagement and social interaction. Attendees will learn how stimulating mental activities and strong social connections may enhance brain resilience, reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and

## THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025 (CONTINUED)

### C3. Death Café

*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., M.A., Professor and Director, Geriatrics Education and Research, UNE COM*

At a Death Café, people — often strangers — gather to discuss death. The Death Café's objective is to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their finite lives. There will be a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is a discussion group and not intended to be a grief support group or counseling session. For those who want to explore dying/death in their minds and/or hearts, hear others' thoughts on dying/death, and listen to varied opinions and experiences on dying/death, the Death Café is for you. **There is a limit of 20 attendees, and sign-up is required for participation. A gallery area for observers may be available.**

### C4. Introduction and Brief Overview of the Rural Dementia Training Project - HRSA GRANT SESSION

*Clifford M. Singer, M.D.*

Singer will give a brief overview of the federally-funded Rural Dementia Training Project and define the learning objectives of today's sessions.

### An Integrated Framework for Diagnosing Dementia (10:35 a.m.)

*Justin Otis, M.D., Neuropsychiatrist*

Otis will review the most common causes of cognitive decline and dementia in older adults, compare and contrast their clinical features and neuropathology, and present an integrated framework for diagnosing and treating neurodegenerative disorders.

### Cognitive Assessment of MCI and Dementia (11:10 a.m.)

*Caroline Hollnagel, Ph.D., Neuropsychologist*

Hollnagel will discuss both rapid and detailed neuropsychological assessments and how each technique can lead to a diagnosis and personalized treatment plan. She will also clarify appropriate cognitive testing at different stages of cognition, from subjective memory complaints to more advanced dementia.

**11:45 a.m. LUNCH: Exhibit Hall Open Networking Lunch Tables and Maine Dirigo Geriatrics Society Meeting**  
Lunch Sponsor: GT Independence

### 11:55 a.m. SPECIAL SESSIONS:

*Open to all attendees*

### Memory Bridge Movie: Love is Listening: Dementia Without Loneliness

Room: McMurtry

### GT Independence

Room: Stotesbury

### 1 p.m.

### Workshops Session D

### D1. Maine's Direct Care Workforce Response: Raising All Voices

*Susan Wehry, M.D., Director, AgingME, UNE; Elizabeth Gattine, J.D., Senior Policy Advisor and Cabinet on Aging Coordinator, Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future; and Brenda Gallant, Executive Director, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program*

A panel discussion will report on Maine's multifaceted strategies to address challenges in the direct care workforce, successes to date, and the innovations ahead. Featuring representatives from the Maine Council on Aging, AgingME (Maine's Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program, or GWEP), the state of Maine and its Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the panel will examine innovative solutions to meet the care and service needs of older Mainers by addressing the needs and desires of the direct care workforce. Topics include improving wages and job quality, enhancing training programs, and fostering collaboration across sectors to meet the needs of an aging population. The discussion aims to inspire additional actionable steps for strengthening Maine's care economy.



## THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025 (CONTINUED)

### D2. 3iHome Affordable & Technology Driven Independent Living Options in Maine: The Future is Now

*Paul Linet, J.D., Founder and CEO, 3i Housing of Maine*

3i HoME is a Maine-based nonprofit with a mission to develop supportive affordable housing for households with a family member living with a disability. Through strong partnerships, 3i HoME is focused on promoting Independent living through the use of Innovative smart home assistive technology in Integrated home and community-based settings. The presentation will address the housing crisis facing people with disabilities, the direct care workforce crisis, and the opportunities to enhance the quality of life for people with complex needs while saving the health care system precious resources by adopting the 3i HoME model. **Repeat of session C2 presented on Wednesday, May 21.**

### D3. The Future of Aging in Maine – Aging Policy Year in Review (MCOA)

*Jess Maurer, Esq., CEO, Maine Council on Aging*

From housing and transportation, to poverty and the direct care workforce, this fast-paced session will cover a lot of policy ground, focused keenly on solutions. The Maine Council on Aging leads efforts to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged and secure lives in our homes and communities with choices and opportunities. This workshop will explore policy barriers to reaching this goal and help participants understand how these barriers are being addressed at the federal, state, and local levels.

### D4. Clinical Pathways for Dementia in Primary Care – HRSA GRANT SESSION

*Lori Towne, FNP, and Clifford M. Singer, M.D.*

In this session, Towne, a primary care provider, and Singer, a geriatric psychiatrist, will review consensus guidelines for evaluating and treating MCI and dementia in the primary care setting and when referral to specialty services is recommended.

### Prescribing for Dementia Related Behavioral Symptoms (1:35 p.m.) – HRSA GRANT SESSION

*John Campbell, M.D., Neuropsychiatrist*

Campbell will review the assessment and pharmacologic treatment of moderate and severe emotional and behavioral symptoms and distress in persons with dementia. The session will

cover evidence-based treatment of the common symptoms encountered in outpatient, hospital, and nursing home settings and define the types of symptoms for which medication trials are indicated and which indicate the need for non-pharmacologic or non-psychotropic measures.

**2:15 p.m. BREAK: Dessert and Exhibit Hall Open**

### 2:30 p.m. CLOSING ATTENDEE FORUM Addressing Ageism in Healthcare

*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., M.A., Professor and Director, Geriatrics Education and Research, UNE COM*

AARP provided funding to the Gerontological Society of America to conduct a national project to address ageism in health care. The objective is to ensure health care professionals have the knowledge and skills to care for people equitably, with dignity and respect, across the lifespan. This attendee forum will provide a robust platform for discussing this issue with the intent of identifying some viable solutions.

**3:25 p.m. 32nd Maine Geriatrics Conference Wrap-up**

*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., M.A., Professor and Director, Geriatrics Education and Research, UNE COM*

### 2:30 p.m. D5. Non-pharmacologic Approaches to Behavioral Symptoms – HRSA GRANT SESSION

*Jaime Rogers, LCSW, Kayla McMullen, RN*

Rogers and McMullen will provide a brief review of evidence-based behavioral, social, environmental, and experiential interventions for anxiety, restlessness, boredom, sleep disturbances, and a variety of behavioral and emotional symptoms commonly seen in people exhibiting troubling behavioral symptoms commonly associated with dementia.

### Brief Topics: Palliative Care for Dementia; Prognosis in MCI and Late-life Dementia (3:15 p.m.) – HRSA GRANT SESSION

*Zoe Tenney, FNP, and Clifford M. Singer, M.D.*


In these brief presentations, Tenney, a palliative care specialist, will review important elements of palliative and hospice care of persons with dementia, and Singer, a geriatric psychiatrist, will present tips on informing patients and families on prognosis in two common scenarios seen in the clinic.

## THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025 (CONTINUED)

4 p.m. **D6. Dementia in Long Term Care**  
- HRSA GRANT SESSION  
*Ari Berman, M.D.*

Berman, a geriatric internist and long-term care provider, will present the challenges and best practices of caring for people with dementia in long-term care and memory care units, reinforcing and expanding on the previous presentations on assessing and treating physical and behavioral symptoms in these settings.

**Caring for Caregivers 101 (4:30 p.m.)**  
- HRSA GRANT SESSION

*Kathleen Young, NP, and Jaime Rogers, LCSW* 

Young, psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, and Rogers will discuss identifying and managing caregiver distress and burnout and provide information on available resources, including support groups, technology, and respite care.