



Supporting Families

Inspiring Hope.

11th Annual Healthy Lives Matter

Alzheimer's Education Seminar

AN EVENT BROUGHT TO YOU BY
TARRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONER RODERICK MILES, JR.



TARRANT COUNTY
PRECINCT ONE

Welcome

Welcome to the 11th Annual Healthy Lives Matter Alzheimer's Education Seminar. We are honored to gather with you once again for a day dedicated to learning, connection, and community strength.

*This year's theme, **"Supporting Families, Inspiring Hope"** reflects our ongoing commitment to walking alongside families affected by Alzheimer's disease. Whether you are a caregiver, a healthcare professional, a community partner, or someone seeking knowledge and encouragement, your presence today reinforces the collective power we share in facing this journey together.*

Throughout this seminar, you will hear from experts, explore resources, and engage in conversations designed to empower, uplift, and prepare families with the tools they need. More importantly, today is a reminder that no one walks this path alone—our community is strong, compassionate, and forward looking.

Thank you for joining us, for supporting one another, and for continuing to inspire hope.

Together, we make healthy lives matter.



Scan here to complete the end-of-seminar evaluation.

11th Annual Healthy Lives Matter **Alzheimer's Education Seminar**

8:00 am - 9:00 am: **Registration/Breakfast/Exhibits**

GENERAL SESSION **Energy Auditorium/TRTR - 4008**

9:00 am – 9:30 am Welcome
Roderick Miles, Jr., Commissioner, Tarrant County Precinct One
The Honorable Roy Charles Brooks, Founder, Healthy Lives Matter
S. Sean Madison, Ed.D. President, Tarrant County College Trinity River Campus
Meagan Johnson, Chapter Executive, Dallas Northeast Texas & North Central Texas
Alzheimer's Association

9:00 am – 10:30 am **Energy Auditorium/TRTR - 4008 (CEU)**
Shaping the Future of Alzheimer's Through Science, Advocacy & Community Health (Spanish Translation)
Dr. Melissa Petersen, Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Institute for Translational Research at the University of North Texas Health
Meagan Johnson, Chapter Executive, Dallas Northeast Texas & North Central Texas, Alzheimer's Association.
Dr. W. Brian Byrd, Director, Tarrant County Public Health
Moderator: Jennifer Severance, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Vice Chair of Research, Department of Internal & Specialty Medicine, Center for Older Adults, UNT Health Fort Worth
Shaping the future of Alzheimer's involves combining scientific innovation, strong advocacy, and community health initiatives. Advances in research are improving early detection, treatment approaches, and understanding of the disease. At the same time, policy advocacy and public awareness help expand access to care, reduce stigma, and increase support for families. Community health programs play a crucial role by providing education, resources, and culturally informed services that empower individuals and strengthen local responses to Alzheimer's

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

10:30 am– 11:30 am **Energy Auditorium/TRTR - 4008**
Understanding Cultural Barriers to Dementia Diagnosis & Care (Spanish Translation)
Tia Viera, Director of Bilingual Education, James L. West Center for Dementia Care
Department of Internal & Specialty Medicine, Center for Older Adults, UNT Health Fort Worth
Cultural beliefs and stigma often lead families to see memory loss as normal aging rather than a medical condition, delaying dementia diagnosis and care. Language barriers, low health literacy, and mistrust of healthcare systems—especially in communities with histories of discrimination or immigration concerns—further limit access to services. Family centered decision making and expectations to provide care within the home can also conflict with medical recommendations, making early intervention less likely.

10:30 am– 11:30 am **Understanding & Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors (CEU)- WIN/TRTR-4030**
Jennifer Arnouville, DO, CPE, FAAFP,
Medical Director, Strategic Partnerships Team, WellMed Medical Management
Assistant Professor, Burnett School of Medicine at Texas Christian University
Understanding and responding to dementia related behaviors involves recognizing that changes such as agitation, wandering, confusion, or withdrawal are often triggered by underlying needs, medical issues, or environmental stress. By identifying the cause—like pain, fear, overstimulation, or unmet social or emotional needs—caregivers can respond calmly, adapt to the environment, offer reassurance, and use supportive communication to reduce distress and improve safety and quality of life.

10:30 am– 11:30 am **The Effect of Technology on Cognitive Health – Action Suite C/TRTR-4212**
Michael Scullin, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience Baylor University

Using technology challenges the brain through ongoing learning, aids social connection, and helps with memory compensation—mirroring benefits typically attributed to education and physical activity. Computer-based and VR cognitive training programs (e.g., working memory, attention) show moderate effectiveness—especially VR—for rehabilitating brain function in conditions like traumatic brain injury, improving global cognition, executive function, and attention. Excessive screen time and heavy reliance on digital tools can disrupt attention emotional and social skills, sleep, and even long term cognitive reserve. Embodied in what some call an “efficiency-atrophy paradox,” overuse might reduce capacity for unassisted cognitive effort. When used actively and mindfully, technology fosters cognitive resilience—especially for older adults—while passive or excessive use can harm attention, mental health, and sleep. Digital cognitive interventions hold therapeutic promise, particularly in structured settings like VR environments.

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 pm

EXTENDED BREAK & EXHIBITS

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Energy Auditorium/TRTR - 4008

“La salud mental y la comunidad de fe (Mental Health and the Faith Community) (Spanish Translation)

Dr. Carlos Valencia, Senior Pastor of Iglesia Victoria en Cristo

Regular participation in faith communities offers structure, social connection, hope, and a sense of purpose, which are linked to lower rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide. Practices like prayer, meditation, and rituals provide calm, emotional grounding, and reflective space, enhancing mental well-being. Churches are increasingly offering faith-informed counseling, support groups (e.g., for depression, grief, trauma), and mental health ministries, trainings for pastors and lay leaders in mental-health awareness, first aid, and crisis response, and resources like the “Sanctuary Course” and toolkits (e.g., Spiritual First Aid) for trauma-informed congregational care. Faith communities offer significant mental health benefits—through emotional support, reduced stigma, structured outreach, and integrated care—especially when they partner with professionals, leverage clergy training, and implement targeted programs.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Preserving the Emotional & Psychological Wellbeing of Alzheimer’s Caregivers (CEU)- WIN/TRTR4030

Alaina Amyx, Dementia Care Specialist

Katharine Zufelt, Special Grants Manager, The United Way of TC REACH Program

Caregiving for someone with Alzheimer’s significantly strains emotional and psychological well-being. Caregivers often experience chronic stress, anxiety, depression, guilt, exhaustion, and grief from relentless responsibilities and watching a loved one decline. To preserve caregivers’ mental health, research and best practices highlight several effective strategies; Respite Care, Structured Interventions, Psychological support and health assessment and education. These strategies—combining rest, structured support, education, and emotional care—play a vital role in sustaining caregivers’ emotional health, enhancing their resilience, and improving the quality of care they provide.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

How Do I Pay For Care? (Medicaid, VA, Long-Term Care, Cost of Care) – Action Suite C/TRTR-4212

Cody D. Akridge, BSHA, LNFA, CALM, CDP, CADDCT, Advisory Committee Chair

Long-Term Care Administration Program, Tarrant County College Trinity River Campus

Paying for dementia care often combines personal funds with programs like Medicare, Medicaid, long term care insurance, and VA benefits. Medicare covers medical needs but not long term custodial care, leaving families to cover substantial out of pocket costs. Medicaid can fund nursing homes and some home and community based services for those who meet strict financial and medical criteria. Long term care insurance and VA Aid & Attendance benefits help with in home care, adult day services, and memory care depending on eligibility and policy details. Families still shoulder most expenses, making tax deductions and community programs essential tools for easing financial strain.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Lunch/Exhibits: Lunch will be served in Action Suite A

Dementia Live Experience – Power TRTR-4012 (8:00am – 1:00pm)

Presented in English & Spanish by Dementia Friendly Fort Worth

Speakers



Dr. Melissa Petersen is an Associate Professor at the University of North Texas Health - Fort Worth in the Department of Family Medicine and Institute for Translational Research. As a clinically trained neuropsychologist, her research focuses broadly on factors related to cognitive decline with a specific emphasis on Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Petersen is actively involved in several ongoing NIH-funded studies focused on aging including the Health and Aging Brain Study-Health Disparities as a Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) and the Alzheimer's Biomarker Consortium- Down Syndrome (ABC-DS) as site PI. Her work has examined how blood biomarkers can help to detect early cognitive changes across broad and underserved communities.



Meagan Johnson is a relationship-driven leader with over a decade of experience in fundraising, corporate engagement, and community impact. She is known for connecting mission-focused organizations with partners to deliver meaningful, results-oriented outcomes. She has held leadership roles with the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the American Cancer Society, where she strengthened partnerships, led growth strategies, and expanded fundraising efforts. Most recently, Meagan served as Region SVP and Senior Executive Director of Development and Community Health for the American Heart Association in Dallas, leading initiatives that advanced community impact and regional growth.



Tia Viera is the Director of Bilingual Education at the James L. West Center for Dementia Care, where she is devoted to empowering caregivers, especially those within Hispanic and Latino communities, to better understand, navigate, and manage the challenges of dementia. Drawing on extensive experience in dementia care and community education, Tia has served in key roles with the Alzheimer's Association North Central Texas Chapter and Dementia Friendly Fort Worth. Her professional expertise is deeply rooted in personal experience: for more than 16 years, she provided support for her mother, gaining profound insight into dementia's progression and the communication skills essential for supporting individuals and families through each stage of the disease.



Dr. Jennifer Arnouville is a passionate physician educator, public speaker, and advocate for improving care for older adults. With over 12 years of experience as a primary care geriatrician, she now serves as Regional Medical Director for WellMed, where she partners with contracted health systems to drive best performance and optimize patient outcomes in value-based care. Dr. Arnouville is a frequent public speaker at community events and has been a recurring featured presenter for the Alzheimer's Association, sharing her expertise on aging and dementia care. She also serves as an Assistant Professor at the TCU Burnett School of Medicine and as geriatrics faculty for a local internal medicine residency program, mentoring the next generation of physicians.



Dr. Jennifer Severance is Vice Chair of Research and Associate Professor in the Department of Internal & Specialty Medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, with over 20 years of experience in gerontology, public health and long-term care administration in the North Texas area. Through grant-funded projects, she promotes age-friendly and dementia-friendly care models and builds cross-sector collaborations that scale evidence-based innovations into real-world practice. Her research focuses on improving high-quality care for older adults and family caregivers, especially those in underserved, rural, or under-resourced communities, through community partnerships, aging services infrastructure, and systems-level change.



Michael Scullin, Ph.D., is a Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Baylor University with expertise in cognition, technology, sleep, and aging. He completed his B.S. at Furman University, his PhD in the Behavior, Brain, & Cognition Program at Washington University in St. Louis, and a post-doctoral fellowship in the Neurology Department at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Scullin has published more than 100 journal articles and book chapters and he is listed as one of the top 2% most cited scientists in the world by Stanford University. His research on technology use and Alzheimer's disease has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and his findings have been covered by >300 media outlets including the New York Times, Fox News, Forbes, Fortune, and Good Morning America.



Dr. Carlos Valencia has served as Senior Pastor of Iglesia Victoria en Cristo since 2009. He holds a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.), with doctoral research focused on suicide prevention and the role of faith communities in supporting mental health, as well as a Master of Science in Management. In addition to his pastoral leadership, Dr. Valencia has partnered with several hospital systems through Faith Community Health initiatives, helping bridge health-care and faith communities to promote holistic well-being. He is passionate about equipping churches to provide compassionate, informed support for individuals and families navigating mental health challenges.



A'Laina Amyx received a Master of Social Work from The University of Texas at Arlington in 2005. After a long career with the State of Texas serving children and families, she transitioned her focus to Alzheimer's and Dementia care, spending eight years with the Alzheimer's Association delivering the REACH Program, which provides evidence based counseling and education to caregivers. She currently brings this specialized experience to the Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County, where she continues serving caregivers as a contracted Dementia Care Specialist.



Cody D. Akridge is a Licensed Nursing Facility Administrator and Corporate Director of Administrators in Training for Creative Solutions in Healthcare, one of the largest long-term care providers in the state of Texas. With over 13 years of progressive leadership experience in the long-term care industry, Cody brings a unique combination of real-world expertise, compassion, and servant leadership to everything he does. In his corporate role, Cody oversees an average of 20 administrators in training across the state of Texas, guiding the next generation of long-term care leaders from the beginning of their journey through licensure. He also serves as Interim Administrator of Record at any Creative Solutions facility in Texas where his leadership may be needed.



Katharine Zufelt holds a Master of Science in Dementia and is a certified Community Health Worker Instructor with more than 10 years of experience in aging services, evidence-based health promotion programs, and grant management. Katharine serves as the Special Grants Manager for the Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County where she oversees discretionary grants, data compliance, program performance, and reporting requirements. She works closely with community partners to ensure compliance with funding requirements and achieve positive outcomes for older adults and caregivers.



Dr. W. Brian Byrd joined Tarrant County Public Health in 2024. Dr. Byrd previously oversaw provider operations for Palm Primary Care- Texas. He is board-certified in Family Medicine and has treated patients in Fort Worth since 2001. Dr. Byrd is a former Member of the Fort Worth City Council, the former board chair of MedStar, and the former CEO of Texas Hospice.



Accreditation Statement



In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth. The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth and Healthy Lives Matter is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit.

Texas Administrative Code

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth certifies this activity meets the requirements for continuing education for Texas-licensed Professional Counselors and Texas-licensed Marriage and Family Therapists.

Designation Statements

Nurses

This activity is designated for up to 3.00 ANCC contact hour(s).

Social Workers

Social workers completing this course receive up to 3.00 general continuing education credits.

Licensed Professional Counselors

This activity is designated for up to 3.00 contact hour(s).

Certificate of Attendance

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth designates this activity for up to 3.00 hour(s) of participation.

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