

Aging & Disability Summit

An annual conference uniting the people and systems that address the challenges of aging and disabilities in Connecticut.

Monday, October 6, 2025

Aqua Turf Club • Plantsville, CT



Presented by



AgingCT

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AgingCT and the Centers for Independent Living Welcome You to Connecticut's 2025 Aging & Disability Summit!

We are thrilled and grateful to welcome you to this year's Summit, where we continue our shared mission of supporting Connecticut's aging and disability communities.

Designated by federal guidelines, the Area Agencies on Aging and Centers for Independent Living play a critical role in connecting older adults and individuals with disabilities to essential services and supports. Our common goal is to promote autonomy and ensure quality of life across the lifespan.

We acknowledge the complexities and fragmentation within the long-term care system, and we recognize the challenges that individuals and caregivers face when seeking services. That's why we're committed to greater collaboration across networks and streamlined access to care. We are fortunate that Connecticut continues to lead the way in forging pathways for all adults to thrive.

This year's Summit focuses on four key areas:

- **Connecting Service Systems**
- **Navigating Change**
- **Human Sexuality**
- **Cognitive Assessment**

These themes are designed to strengthen our collective work and foster innovation among professionals within the aging and disability networks. Building on the success of last year's Summit, we look forward to hearing from industry leaders, sharing best practices, and exploring new ideas to drive system improvements.

Connecticut is a wonderful place to live and is also a national leader in progressive policies and innovative programs that enhance quality of life for all residents. Today's Summit is a unique opportunity to bring together passionate providers and advocates to reimagine what aging and disability support can look like in the state we call home. **Thank you for joining us on this journey toward a more connected, inclusive, and empowered future for all.**

Sincerely,

Alison Dvorak, Executive Director
Senior Resources Agency on Aging: Eastern CT

Marie Allen, President/CEO
Southwestern CT Agency on Aging

Maureen McIntyre, CEO
North Central Area Agency on Aging

Melissa Lang, President/CEO
Agency on Aging of South Central CT

Spring Raymond, *Executive Director*
Western CT Area Agency on Aging

Carmen Correa-Rios, *Executive Director*
Center for Disability Rights

Eileen M. Healy, *Executive Director*
Independence Northwest, Inc

Jaclyn Pinney, *Executive Director*
Independence Unlimited

Melissa Cullen-Carter, *Executive Director*
Access Independence

Sharon Heddle, *Executive Director*
Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut

This program has been approved by the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Health Care Administrators for 5 CEU's to Connecticut Nursing Home Administrators attending the entire event. This program has also been approved for 5 Continuing Education Credit Hours by the National Association of Social Workers, CT and meets the continuing education criteria for Social Work Licensure renewal. Approval meets the continuing education criteria for CT LMSWs, LMFTs, LPCs, and licensed psychologists. Any concerns related to CEC's should be directed to aruggerio@swcaa.org. CEC's will be emailed in 45 days.



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8:30AM - 9:00AM

Doors Open, Vendors, coffee and light fare
Kay's Pier North and South

9:00AM - 9:30AM

Welcome message from Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and CT Leadership
Kay's Pier North

9:30AM - 10:30AM

Judith A. Stein Advocate's Award Presentation & Keynote Address from recipient Alison Barkoff (see pg 6)
Kay's Pier North

10:30AM - 10:45AM

Break & Vendor Exhibits
Kay's Pier South and Kays Pier North

10:45AM - 12:00PM

Accessing Services through the Eyes of the Consumers (see pg 8)
Kay's Pier North

Decline in Judgment and Functional Capacity in Older Adults with Cognitive Disorders: Tips for Early Detection and Intervention, and Prevention (see pg 8)
Kay's Pier South

12:00PM - 1:15PM

Lunch and Vendor Exhibits
Kay's Pier North and South

1:15PM - 2:30PM

Leadership in Uncertain Times (see pg 10)
Kay's Pier North

Exploring Human Sexuality & Intimacy in the Aging and Disability Communities (see pg 10)
Kay's Pier South

2:30PM - 2:45PM

Break and Vendor Exhibits
Kay's Pier South and Kays Pier North

2:45PM - 3:45PM

Keynote for the future- How Robots and Artificial Intelligence Will Make Our Lives Better (see pg 12)
Kay's Pier North

3:45PM - 4:00PM

Closing Remarks, CEC, and Survey Reminders
Kay's Pier North

Aging & Disability Summit

There is no single aging experience
let's work together to make Connecticut a place
where people can have the aging experience
they want, in the setting of their choice.



The Bureau of Aging works with the state's Area Agencies on Aging and community providers to ensure that Connecticut's older adults have access to the supportive services necessary to live with dignity, security, and independence.



Welcome from Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and CT Leadership

9:00 - 9:30 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Judith A. Stein Advocate's Award Presentation & Keynote Address

9:30 - 10:30 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by Judith Stein

The Judith A. Stein Advocate's Award honors an individual whose work reflects Judy Stein's unwavering commitment to advocacy, amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities, and protecting the fundamental human rights of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

This year's awardee is Ms. Alison Barkoff, J.D., a nationally recognized expert in long-term services and support (LTSS), Medicaid, disability and aging policy, and civil rights. For over 25 years, Ms. Barkoff has led legal and policy initiatives aimed at improving the lives of those facing barriers to care and community living. She has testified before Congress and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and is a passionate advocate for equity and inclusion.

From January 2021 to October 2024, Ms. Barkoff served as Administrator of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, advising on national aging and disability policy and overseeing cross-agency initiatives related to LTSS, civil rights, housing, the direct care workforce, family caregiving, and healthy aging. Her prior roles include Special Counsel for Olmstead Enforcement at the U.S. Department of Justice and Senior Advisor at CMS.

Now in the private sector, she is the Harold and Jane Hirsh Associate Professor of Health Law and Policy and Program Director at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University.

Ms. Barkoff's keynote will explore the intersection of aging and disability, national trends, and policies shaping the future of care. Her remarks will set a powerful foundation for the day's discussions.

Aging & Disability Summit

About Our AFL Program



Adult Family Living is a comprehensive approach refined by Juniper, enabling our clients to thrive at home through the support and empowerment of their Direct Caregivers.

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- Respite care, agency support and continued education available to Direct Caregivers
- 24/7 office & nurse support

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Adult Day Centers

Set in a safe, warm, inviting, home-like environments, Juniper Adult Day Centers offer your clients a chance to socialize with peers in a comfortable setting. Adult Day services are offered Monday through Saturday from 8 am to 4 pm, with professional nurse care, meals and transportation. **Now accepting referrals for Spanish speaking clients, at our new ADC facility in Hamden CT**



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Accessing Services through the Eyes of the Consumers

10:45 - 12:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Representatives of AgingCT and Connecticut's Centers for Independent Living, Lisa Tepper Bates, President & CEO, United Way of Connecticut (2-1-1), Christine Weston, Director of Community Options, Department of Social Services (DSS), Commissioner Amy Porter, Aging & Disability Services, and Guests from the community

This session explores how Connecticut residents access critical services and support through the lens of consumer experience. It offers a behind-the-scenes look at collaboration among Aging & Disability Services, DSS, and United Way 2-1-1 and introduces the "No Wrong Door" approach to service delivery. A look into the future of Connecticut's aging and disability referral and response system.

Decline in Judgment and Functional Capacity in Older Adults with Cognitive Disorders: Tips for Early Detection and Intervention, and Prevention

10:45 - 12:00 | Room: Kay's Pier South

Presented by: Dr. Nadia Paré, UCONN Health.

This session addresses one of the most difficult challenges for aging and disability professionals: assessing decision-making capacity in older adults with cognitive decline. When do poor decisions reflect personal autonomy, and when do they signal risk? Participants will learn how to evaluate decisional capacity in degrees. Join us for a robust discussion of the strategies for supporting functional independence amid limitations.

Lunch and Vendor Exhibits

12:00 - 1:15 | Room: Lunch in Kay's Pier North, Visit Vendors in Kay's Pier North & South

Aging & Disability Summit



Fostering aging,
dementia, and disability
inclusive communities.

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AN INITIATIVE OF



Leadership in Uncertain Times

1:15 - 2:30 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Anne Yurasek, Fio Partners

In a climate of rapidly shifting regulations, funding uncertainties, and evolving community needs, today's leaders must be equipped to adapt. Connecticut's leading nonprofit consultant shares real-world strategies to guide teams through uncertainty with confidence. Join us to discover communication techniques for engaging stakeholders and staff. This session will help professionals develop risk mitigation and leadership strategies for navigating change.

Exploring Human Sexuality & Intimacy in the Aging and Disability Communities

1:15 - 2:30 | Room: Kay's Pier South

Presented by: Katherine McLaughlin, M.Ed., and Dr. Mitchell Tepper

This open and honest discussion explores human connection, intimacy, and sexuality among aging individuals and people with disabilities. Topics include institutional policies, cultural bias, consent, and supporting intimacy across all life stages. Attendees will learn strategies for supporting the sexual needs of individuals with disabilities and older adults while identifying societal and institutional barriers to intimacy and sexual health care.

Break and Vendor Exhibits

2:30 - 2:45 | Room: Kay's Pier South and Kay's Pier North

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How Robots and Artificial Intelligence Will Make Our Lives Better

2:45 - 3:45 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Dr. Paul Wright, Nuvance Health with introductory remarks from Dr. John Patrick, author and leading technology pioneer

Explore the rapidly evolving landscape of robotics and artificial intelligence, with a focus on applications in healthcare and long-term services. Dr. Wright discusses both the promise and the challenges of integrating AI into daily life, including the potential for job displacement and strategies for workforce adaptation. This final plenary session helps attendees gain insight into the impact of AI on healthcare and aging services.

Closing Remarks, CECs and Surveys

3:45 - 4:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North



Aging & Disability Summit

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Committee Members

Alexa Ruggiero, SWCAA

Alison Dvorak, Senior Resources

Alyse Bergersen, Independence Northwest

Ashley Mongillo, Team, Inc.

Carmen Correa-Rios, Center for Disability Rights

Eileen Healy, Independence Northwest

Elanit Linder, Jewish Family Service

Jennifer Bennett, Director of Social & Senior Services of Town of Avon

Jillian Ruisi, Team, Inc.

Jodi Brazal, Department of Aging and Disability Services

**Kelly McDermott, Elderly Housing
Management**

**Kimberly Smith, Disabilities Network
of Eastern CT**

**Kristine Johnson, Hartford Healthcare,
Center for Healthy Aging**

Marie Allen, SWCAA

Maureen McIntyre, NCAAA

Melissa Lang, AOASCC

Molly Cole, CTSILC

Peter Eder, SWCAA, Advisory Council

Scott Robbins, Independence Northwest

Shanon Jordan, SWCAA

Shoshana Merced, Town of Marlborough

Spring Raymond, WCAAA

Stacy Chavis, Alzheimer's Association

Tricia Hadden, WCAAA

**Walter Glomb, CT Council on
Developmental Disabilities**



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