

Thank You

Inspirational Sponsors



Session Sponsors



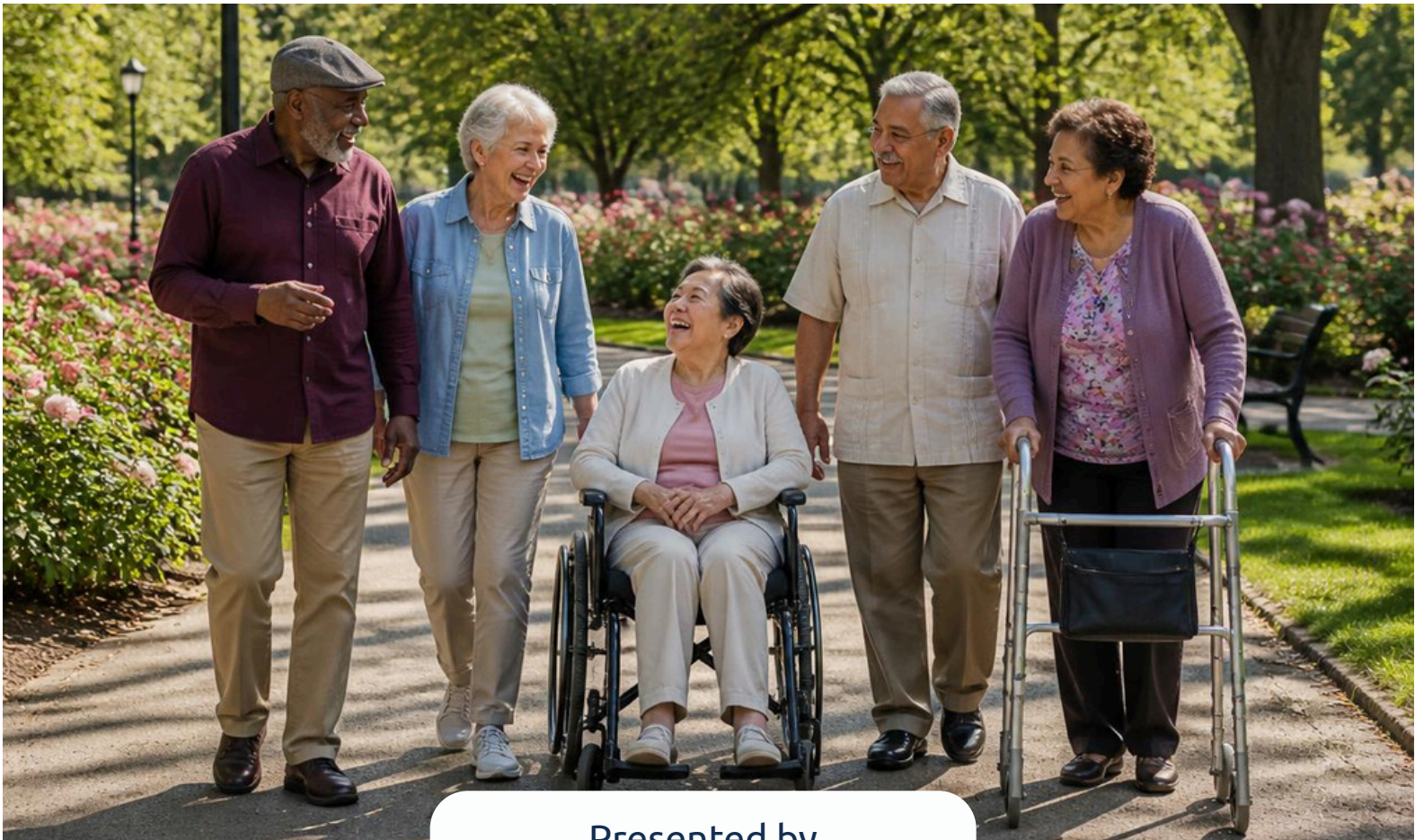
Aging & Disability Summit

Aging & Disability Summit

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

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Aqua Turf Club | Plantsville, CT



Presented by



8:30 - 9:00	Doors open, visit vendors, coffee & light fare <i>Kay's Pier North & South</i>
9:00 - 9:40	Welcome message from Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Aging & Disability Services Department & DSS Leadership <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
9:40 - 10:00	Judith A. Stein Advocate's Award Presented by Judy Stein to Andrei Brel <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
10:00 - 10:30	Break & Networking with Vendors <i>Kay's Pier South</i>
10:30 - 12:00	Understanding Care Options in the Home <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
10:30 - 12:00	The Promise of Social Security <i>Kay's Pier South</i>
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
1:00 - 1:30	Break & Networking with Vendors <i>Kay's Pier South</i>
1:30 - 2:30	Keynote, Donna Fedus <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
2:30 - 4:00	Bloom Where You Are Planted, <i>helping people thrive wherever they reside!</i> <i>Kay's Pier North</i>
2:30 - 4:00	Decision-Making Tools Across The Lifespan <i>Kay's Pier South</i>

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

Jennifer Bennett, Town of Avon, Senior Services

Jennifer Gorman, Department of Aging & Disability Services

Jillian Ruisi, Team, Inc.
- Kristine Johnson**, Hartford Healthcare Center for Healthy Aging

Marie Allen, SWCAA

Melissa Lang, AOASCC

Robyn Harper-Gulley, NCAAA

Scott Robbins, Independence Northwest

Siobhan Morgan, Creid Services

Spring Raymond, WCAAA

Stacy Chavis, Alzheimer's Association

Tricia Hadden, WCAAA

Walter Glomb, Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities

Wayne Seidel, Connecticut Department of Developmental Services



[illegible]

Welcome to the Connecticut Aging & Disability Summit of 2026!

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

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. Knowledge is power and the Summit aims to make us all more knowledge. We are fortunate that Connecticut continues to lead the way in forging pathways for all adults to thrive.

Alison Dvorak, *Executive Director*
Senior Resources Agency on Aging

Marie Allen, President/CEO
Southwestern CT Agency on Aging

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

Robyn Harper-Gulley, CEO
North Central Area Agency on Aging

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 CT

This program has been approved for 4 Continuing Education Credit Hours by the National Association of Social Workers, CT and meets the continuing education criteria for CT Social Work Licensure renewal. Approval also meets the continuing education criteria for CT LMSWs, LMFTs, LPCs, and licensed psychologists. This program has also been approved by the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Health Care Administrators for 5 CEUs for Connecticut Nursing Home Administrators attending the entire event. Any concerns related to CECs should be directed to aruggiero@swcaa.org.

Aging & Disability Summit



**Quality Home
Care Since 1991**

877-302-2323
www.keepmehome.com

Bloom Where You are Planted, *helping people thrive wherever they reside!*

2:30 - 4:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Alison Dvorak (Moderator), Rachael Laudano, Lisa Cretella, Patty Watts, Leigh Sheilds Church & Steve Gregory

This session explores how individuals can thrive across a range of housing and care settings by prioritizing dignity, self-determination, and equitable access. Participants will examine options from independent living to long-term care and learn how home modifications and supportive services can enable successful aging in place. The discussion will also address how cognitive and functional changes impact housing needs and highlight the roles of advocacy and care coordination. Attendees will gain practical strategies to support safety, independence, and quality of life across the lifespan.

Decision-Making Tools Across the Lifespan

2:30 - 4:00 | Room: Kay's Pier South

Presented by: Attorney Jen Herbst (Moderator), Judge Gabrielle Labonte, Attorney Stephen Keogh & Gretchen Knauf

This session provides a practical overview of healthcare decision-making, including capacity, legal documents, and system navigation. Panelists will discuss advance directives such as Health Care Proxies and Medical Powers of Attorney, as well as Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to guardianship. Attendees will explore how decision-making evolves across settings and cognitive changes, and gain tools to help clients access, understand, and use critical documents to ensure their wishes are respected at every stage of care.

This Session Sponsored by:



NEW HAVEN
ELDERLY SERVICES

Aging & Disability Summit

Aging looks different for EVERYONE



We believe in a state where people can remain connected, supported, and empowered throughout life's journey.

Connecticut Aging and Disability Services' Bureau of Aging is proud to support the AgingCT Summit and the partners, advocates, caregivers, and professionals working to build age-friendly communities across our state.



Welcome from AgingCT (CT AAAs) & Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Aging & Disability Services Department and CT Leadership

AgingCT and the Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living welcome you to the 4th Annual Summit!

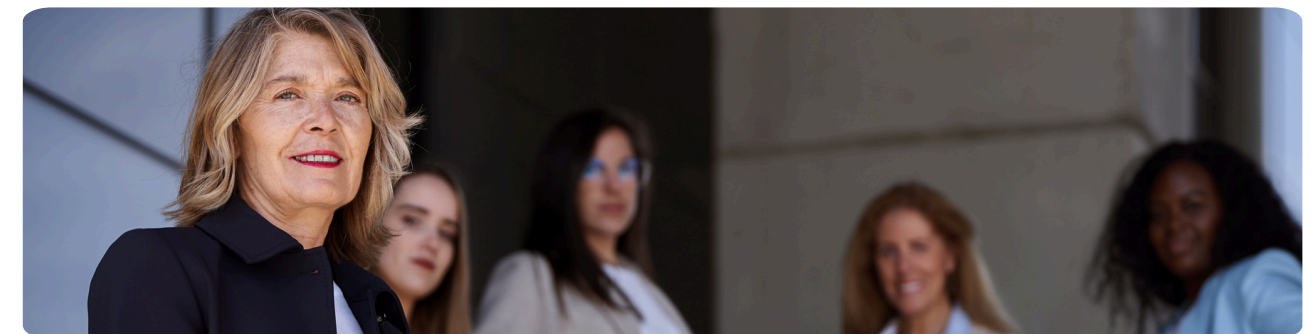
9:00 - 9:40 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Followed by updates from: Christine Weston, Director of Community Options on Department of Social Services and Comminssner Amy Porter of the Aging and Disability Services Department.

This year's Summit focuses on four key areas:

- **Bloom Where You Are Planted, helping people thrive wherever they reside!**
- **The Promise of Social Security**
- **Decision-Making Tools Across the Lifespan**
- **Understanding Care Options in the Home**

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. Each year, the Summit invites Connecticut's thought-provoking leaders, advocates, coordinators and policy makers to create a more connected, inclusive, and empowered future for all.

This Session Sponsored by:



Aging & Disability Summit



Careforth

Supporting Caregivers in Connecticut for Over a Decade

With 25 years of caregiving experience, we are partners you can rely on—attentive to your needs and the families you support—so that we can do what we do best, care for the caregiver.

Our service supports caregivers who:

- Live with and take care of someone eligible for Medicaid
- Help with daily activities like: bathing, eating, dressing, walking, using the bathroom, getting in and out of bed, or on and off chairs

Through Connecticut's Adult Family Living program, Careforth supports caregivers that help their Medicaid-eligible loved ones living at home by providing:



Coaching

Ongoing professional support and guidance



Compensation

Payment in the form of a tax-free stipend



Connection

Secure mobile app connects to coaches



Confidence

Educational resources to help ease stress



Careforth, Inc. is accredited by NCQA for its Structured Family Caregiving Program

LEARN MORE: careforth.com/ct

866-797-2333

Networking & Vendor Exhibits

1:00 - 1:30 | Room: Kay's Pier South

Please move into Kay's Pier South to network and talk with vendors

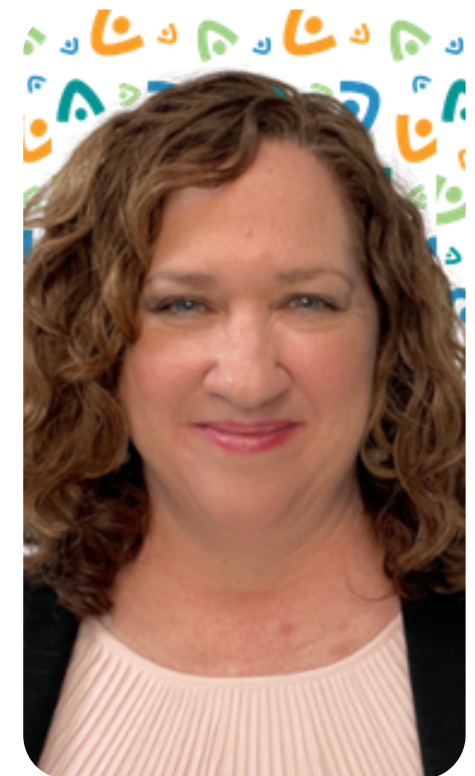
Keynote, Donna Fedus

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

Presented by Donna Fedus

Prevention of Compassion Fatigue & Burnout
Professionals in aging and disability services regularly navigate trauma, emotional stress, and the complex demands of supporting vulnerable individuals. In the midst of these realities lies an opportunity to strengthen resilience and sustain meaningful, compassionate care. This keynote explores how to recognize early signs of compassion fatigue, build personal resilience practices, and foster workplace cultures that support long-term well-being.

About the speaker: Donna Fedus is a gerontologist educator, professor, program strategist, instructional designer, researcher, and entrepreneur. Her life's work - pursued enthusiastically for more than 30 years so far - is to offer alternatives to the tragedy narrative that often surrounds aging, caregiving, and dementia. Donna is gerontologist and founder of Borrow My Glasses, which provides scalable learning solutions, training, and evaluation services for organizations and individuals looking to embrace the many opportunities brought by longevity.



This Session Sponsored by:



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.

- Weekly Registered Nurse visits by 45+ RNs statewide
- Online family learning center for caregivers
- Weekly caregiver stipend
- Multilingual Nurses and office staff speaking 25+ languages
- Nursing assessment completed within two days of Intake/24 hour rush referral possible
- Proprietary technology providing the clients care team with real-time status updates
 - Fall Detection
 - Communication between caregiver, nurse, administrative staff and care-managers
- Respite care, agency support and continued education available to Direct Caregivers
- 24/7 office & nurse support

Meals On Wheels

We deliver Connecticut's finest Meals on Wheels, offering unmatched nutrition and care to our community. Juniper chefs create diverse meal plans, thoughtfully tailored for individual health needs and cultural preferences.

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**



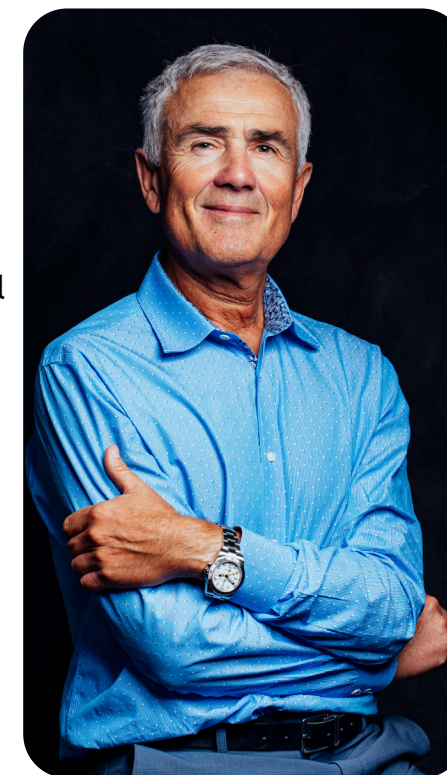
Judith A. Stein Advocate's Award Presentation

9:40 - 10:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Judith Stein Founder, Sr. Advisor, Attorney at the Center for Medicare Advocacy and this year's award winner goes to Andrei Brel

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 Advocate's Award honors Andrei Brel, a tireless champion of home and community-based services. With more than 30 years of service, Andrei has advanced the belief that all individuals deserve to age with dignity, receive care in the least restrictive settings, and remain active in their communities. From his early work with the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services and Protective Services for the Elderly, to founding and expanding access through Juniper Homecare, his leadership has strengthened the state's long-term care system. A dedicated educator and legislative advocate, Andrei's efforts have expanded services and improved quality of life for countless older adults and individuals with disabilities.



Andrei strengthened Connecticut's long-term care infrastructure by increasing the availability of community-based alternatives. Andrei educated the legislators on the importance of the family care options provided through Adult Family Living. Juniper grew into one of Connecticut's most respected home and community-based care organizations over 27 years. Juniper's Adult Day Center and home delivered meals are legendary among clients who enjoy the innovative menu and delicious taste.

Andrei has served thousands of older adults and individuals with disabilities, improving quality of life and independence. Through advocacy and education efforts, Andrei supported policy changes that expanded services and community-based care options. Connecticut has benefitted from the passion, and the knowledge Andrei brings to the care of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Aging & Disability Summit



The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Community of Practice for Bridging Disability and Aging Networks in Connecticut are partners, facilitating a coordinated, consumer- and family-centered, comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive and be included in all facets of community life as they age.

For more information about the Council or the Community of Practice, contact Walter Glomb, Executive Director Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities via email: walter.glomb@ct.gov

Understanding Care Options in the Home

10:30 - 12:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North

Presented by: Tracy Wodatch (Moderator), Mario D'Aquila, Laura Lusebrink, Brooke Mignogna, and Chrissie Schettini

This session explores in-home and community-based care options, including the roles of PCAs, companions, home health aides, nurses, and hospice providers. Panelists will break down eligibility, scope of practice, and funding, while addressing common barriers to accessing services—especially within public programs. The discussion will also highlight Adult Day Centers and Connecticut's Adult Family Living guidelines. Attendees will gain practical tools to navigate systems, support informed decision-making, and advocate for safe, dignified care at home.

The Promise of Social Security

10:30 - 12:00 | Room: Kay's Pier South

Presented by: Walter Glomb (Moderator), Nora Duncan, Robert Rodriguez, Robert Adriani and Claire Volain

Social Security is a lifeline for millions of older adults and individuals with disabilities, often serving as their primary or sole source of income. This session explores the program's future, focusing on policy, advocacy, and strategies to strengthen long-term sustainability. Panelists will also highlight the importance of equitable access, financial literacy, and effective system navigation, while emphasizing the role of professionals in protecting and advancing Social Security for current and future beneficiaries.

Lunch

12:00 - 1:00 | Room: Kay's Pier North

This Session Sponsored by:



Aging & Disability Summit