



Annual Report

2023-24

Prepared for:

Governor Spencer J. Cox

**Utah State Legislature
Health and Human Services**

Submitted by:

**Rob Ence
Executive Director**

**Darlene Curley
Commission Chair**



UtahAging.org
Utah Commission on Aging

Message from the Executive Director

The Utah Commission on Aging (UCOA) is pleased to share the FY 2023-24 Annual Report with Governor Gox, the Utah Legislature, municipal leaders, private and public stakeholders, and collaborative partners. This past fiscal year was foundational in shaping the future of aging in Utah.



Rob Ence

New key statutory members were added to the strategy team and UCOA continued collaborative relationships with partner stakeholders including the Utah Broadband Advisory Council, Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Research Center at Utah State University, Division of Aging and Adult Services, AARP Utah, and many new alliances which contributed to the creation of the Utah Master Plan for Aging which was completed for public review in November of 2023. Final changes and the launch of a measurement dashboard will follow in the next fiscal year.



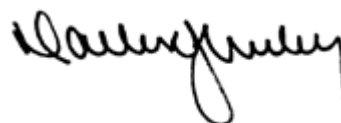
Darlene Curley

Darlene Curley EdD, of Park City, continues to serve as the UCOA Chair and continues to provide insights and guidance throughout all of UCOA's activities. Curley is a former legislator (ME), health policy advisor for Sen. Gillibrand (NY), current educator (Columbia U – NYC), and volunteer with the Utah Medical Reserve Corps.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Ence".

Rob Ence, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darlene Curley".

Darlene Curley, Chair

Our Social Impact

Utahns are better prepared to engage in the opportunities and challenges of aging.

Our Mission

The Utah Commission on Aging convenes stakeholders to innovate, advocate, educate, and communicate to help Utahns navigate the opportunities and challenges of aging.

Our Values

1. Empowering through knowledge
2. Fostering new innovation
3. Advocating effective policy
4. Improving Societal Outcomes

UCOA Commitment to Stakeholders:

(Policy Makers, Researchers, Resource Providers, Public)

1. Research

- Study, evaluate, and report on the projected impact on the state's ecosystem
- Facilitate and conduct the research and study of aging issues
- Study and evaluate policies and programs in other states and countries

2. Public Policy

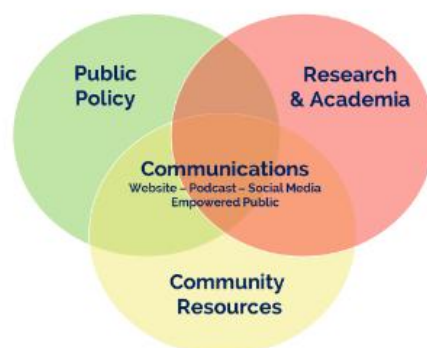
- Identify and recommend policies and programs
- Study, evaluate, and report on the effectiveness of policies and programs
- Work with policy makers in analysis, planning, and preparing

3. Resource Education

- Increase understanding of current and future needs and solutions
- Facilitate collaborative efforts between public and private entities
- Increase public awareness on innovative solutions and services

4. Communications

- Provide a forum for public access and input on aging issues
- Utilize all media formats to disseminate public information
- Report results and account to stakeholders



UCOA Statutory Appointments as of June 30, 2023

Chair:

Curley, Darlene	Public Policy
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Statutory Appointed Members:

Allen, Christy	Utah Transit Authority Coordinated Mobility
Anderson, Amy	Logan City Council and Sunshine Terrace
Burbank, Chris	Public Safety – Former SLC Police Chief
Cameron, Casey*	Department of Workforce Services
Fauth, Beth*	Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Research Center
Grover, Jim	Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
Hollingshaus, Mike	Kem C Gardner Policy Institute
Holmgren, Nels	Division of Aging and Adult Services and DHHS
Kelso, Gary	Long-term Care for the Elderly
Leggett, Paul	SLCo Aging Services Director
Dennis Lifferth*	Tech Charities
Lloyd, Jenifer	AUCH Deputy Director
McCullough, Matt	Utah Technology Network
Milne, Linda	General Public – Emergency Preparedness
Openshaw, Jeri*	Utah Division of Libraries
Ormsby, Alan	AARP Utah State Director
Pinilla-Coxe, Victor H	The Americas Council
Rajeev, Deepthi	Comagine Health
Supiano, Mark	University of Utah HSC – Division of Geriatrics
Wilson, Troy	Wilson Estate Law

**New UCOA appointments during the past fiscal year.*

Executive Director:

Ence, Rob	Utah Center on Aging, Gerontologist
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UCOA Contributing Partners/Organizations/Stakeholders

In appreciation and recognition for the time and effort of the Utah Commission on Aging community of partners who contributed to the evolution of this plan over the past several years and helped shape the vision and content and will continue to advise, monitor, and mold the future aspirations of Utah's adult population. Writing, editing, critiquing, advising, proofing, designing, surveying, focus groups, educational symposia, sharing professional expertise and experience are just a few channels that these individuals and organizations continue to influence this work on behalf of the state of Utah.

Last Name First Name Representing

Abel Holly SOM Div Ger Admin Assistant
 Acero Susana Holy Cross Ministries
 Acevedo Manuel Helpful Village.com
 Aerts Sally Falls Prevention Alliance
 Albertson Raven Alzheimer's Association Program Director
 Allen Christy Utah Transit Authority
 Altman Tracy Med Adv Special Needs Plan
 Andersen Troy Dir of Goodwill Program, Social Work UofU
 Anderson Amy Utah League of Cities and Towns
 Anderson Perrine Medical Provider
 Anderson Seth Legislative Analyst
 Aruscavage Nancy U Geron Grad Student
 Asman Anne U Dept of Psychiatry - Geriatrician
 Babitz Marc Citizen Advocate
 Baczek Christine Sr Dir Youth Education Programs
 Barlow Stewart Utah House
 Barney Traci UDOH Falls Prevention Training
 Barton Windy Uintah County AAA - Vernal
 Beadles Wei DHHS Epidemiologist
 Beattie Miriam U SOM Div of Geriatrics
 Bever Stephanie DHHS Program Coordinator
 Blackham Rachelle Davis County Health and Aging Services
 Bouldin Erin Asst Prof of Epidemiology at UofU
 Bowcutt Jason Utah Division of Arts and Museums
 Braithwaite Raquel Telios Collaborative Network
 Brening Nick Medical Provider
 Brown James Living with Pride.Com
 Brunker Cherie MD Prof Div of Geriatrics UofU
 Brunt Teresa Injury Prevention and Trauma Outreach IMC
 Burbank Chris Public Safety
 Butterwick Adrienne Comagine/HealthInsight
 Cameron Casey Director Dept or Workforce Services
 Carpio Sandra 211 Services Director - United Way
 Checketts Nate Dep Director DHHS
 Chin Brian UHIN
 Chou Ruby WSU Music Specialist
 Christensen Emily Crescendo Music Therapy
 Christensen Marianne SLCo Aging Health Promotion Manager
 Farrell Timothy MD Div of Geriatrics, UoU Center on Aging
 Kulp Stacie Alz Assoc of Utah Executive Director
 Kwan Karen Utah Senate
 Larsen-Ruff Augustine ASU SW Grad Student
 Lee Melissa Alz Assoc Dir of Communications
 Lee Traci Adult Protective Services
 Gallegos Joan Nursing Coalition
 Gallegos Tammy San Juan Co AAA
 Garcia Jesse Weber Morgan AAA Advisory Board Chair
 Garcia-Leavitt Liz UoU Geriatrics - SW Dementia Specialist
 Gardner Emmie Holy Cross Ministries
 Garrett Teresa U College of Nursing
 Glissmeyer Caroline Utah County 211
 Goodman Sam Broadcast Production - Navajo Translation
 Greer Valerie U Dept of Architecture
 Grover Jim Utah Office of Economic Opportunity
 Gruber Tracy Dir DHHS
 Hales Tonya Dep Director DHHS
 Hall Deb Seniors Out and Proud

Last Name First Name Representing

Christensen Tom Elder Law Attorney
 Christiansen Sydnee DHHS Epidemiologist II
 Clark Christine UCOA Policy and Research
 Clayton TantaLisa Utah Legal Services
 Cole Linda Mountainland AAA
 Collett Cami MD, POLST Specialist
 Cornia Gina Utahns Against Hunger
 Correa Kimberlin SL Habitat for Humanity
 Cottam Clint Community Action Partnership
 Cottrell Kristy Citizen Advocate
 Covey Wid Citizen Advocate
 Cressman Rebecca Citizen Advocate
 Cross Jaime Neighborhood House
 Crossley Ken Engage Creativity for Life
 Crowe Carin SL Habitat for Humanity
 Cummings Doug Elder Law Attorney
 Cunningham Jeremy Alz Association
 Curley Darlene UCOA Chair and Public Policy Expert
 Dailey-Provost Jennifer Utah House
 Daniel Candice VA Psychologist
 Dassell Kara Utah Gerontology Interdisciplinary Prog
 Davis Marion Representing Dept of Workforce Services
 Diaz Moore Keith U of Utah Dean of Architecture
 Diehl Cameron Exec Dir League of Cities and Towns
 Dilg Rebecca Director of the Utah Broadband Center
 Draper Cammy Citizen Advocate
 Dresel Anna DAAS Advisory Board
 Ducuara Alysia Get Healthy Utah
 Eaton Jackie U Coll of Nursing
 Edelman Linda U Coll of Nursing
 Eliason Steve Utah House
 Ellington Lee U Coll of Nursing
 Ence Robert UCOA Executive Director
 Escamilla Luz Utah Senate
 Etherington Chris UALA
 Evans Janice Broadcast Journalist
 Faherty Sean Ut Leg Analyst Higher Ed Sub Approp
 Farrell Michael SOM Staff
 Kirkham Doug Six-County AAA
 Fauth Beth USU Alzheimer's Research Center
 Felsted Katarina UoU School of Nursing
 Ford Jack Retired journalist, law enforcement
 Frick Janet Utah Aging Alliance
 Galindo Michael IHC Physician
 Leggett Paul Salt Lake Co AAA
 Lesser Rosemary Utah House
 Lifferth Dennis Tech Charities
 Litvack David Dep Director DHHS
 Lloyd Jenifer Association for Utah Community Health
 Luke Margene Utah Caregivers Association
 Lunt Kyle UDOH Health Informatics Office Director
 Lythgoe Marti Free-Lance Writer and UCOA Blogger
 Macey Joel Community Nursing Services
 Madrid Giselle Cache County Senior Center Director
 McCullough Matt Utah Technology Network
 McFarlane Kim Medical Provider
 McNamee Joey SLCo Aging Services Dep Director

Last Name First Name Representing

Hansen Matt ED of Homecare and Hospice Assoc of UT
Hansford Tracy Utah Division of Arts and Museums
Hart Jeremy SLCo Aging Services Asst Director
Harter Gary ED Dept of Veteran & Military Affairs
Hilman Judi Health Care Consultant
Hinton Melissa Utah Nurse Practitioners Association
Hirabayashi Joseph AARP Dir of Advocacy
Hoftiezer Amy Tooele Co AAA
Hollingshaus Mike Kem C Gardner Policy Institute
Holmgren Nels Dept of Health and Human Services
Hong Andy Associate Professor U Coll of Architecture
Horrocks Shawna Southeastern Utah AAA
Iizuka Nobu Weber Human Services AAA
Ivory Ken Utah House
Iwamoto Jani Attorney
Jackson Andrew Horrocks Engineering
Johnson Grant CAPE Volunteer Davis Co.
Johnson Jaleen Utah Telehealth Network and NTEN Fellow
Jones Patricia Women's Leadership Institute of Utah
Jones Marcel UDOH Medicaid Specialist
Joy Elizabeth "Liz" MD, MPH - Lore Health CMO
Judkins Marsha Utah House
Kelly Michelle UCOA Admin
Kelso Gary Mission Health Services
Pinilla-Coxe Victor Hugo The Americas Council
Podolan Heather SOM Div Ger Admin Assistant
Poelman John One Utah Health Collaborative
Polacheck Laura Independent Writer/Contributor
Polich Toni Seniors Blue Book
Preston Oakley SOM Div Ger Accounting
Pruhs Alan ED of Assoc of Utah Community Health
Quatralle Rosemary Jewish Family Services
Raborn Leanne Utah 211 Outreach & Programs Director
Rajeev Deepthi Comagine Utah
Rasmussen Karina HSC UofU
Redd Emily Homespire Health
Reed Carolyn Bear River AAA
Reeser Courtney So SLC Offices - Digital Navigation Guides
Richardson Brannon Film producer
Richardson DeeDee Citizen Advocate
Riebe Kathleen Utah Senate
Riggle Andrew Disability Law Center
Rollins Tara Ex Dir of Utah Housing Coalition
Rupper Rand MD, VA GRECC
Russell Kristy Alz Coord Council UDOH
Sadler Anna USU Alzheimer's Research Center
Salari Sonia U Family and Consumer Studies
Scammon Deb U Eccles Sch of Business
Schiwal Alex USU Research and Grants
Schonlaw Carrie Five-County AAA
Scott Sarah Neighborhood House
Shepherd Bonnie Citizen Advocate
Shepherd Nichole UDOH Wellness Programs
Sierer Katie Nurse, Hospice House Interest
Silver Ellen Jewish Family Service Executive Director
Simmons Dena BYU Communications
Singer Lewis American Indian Communities
Sipes Alianne DHHS DAAS LTC Ombudsman
Sisofo Briana U Grad Student GIP
Sorenson Jordan Project Manager, UHA
Spangler Allison UHCA Exec Director
Summarell Michelle Uintah Basin AAA
Supiano Katherine U Coll of Nursing
Supiano Mark U of Utah Center on Aging
Tanner Corinna BYU Gerontology Professor
Teigen Shawn Utah Foundation
Telonidis Jacqueline UGEC Curriculum Coordinator
Thackeray Anne Asst Professor Physical Therapy

Last Name First Name Representing

Mendenhall Nan Utah Adult Protective Services
Meppen Diane Kem C Gardner Policy Institute
Milne Linda Emergency Preparedness - Public
Miner Joseph Retired MD and Former Exec Dir of UDOH
Morgan Jen USU ADRC
Mueller-Planitz Florentina Falls Prevention Alliance
Murakami Jake DAAS Deputy Director
Musto Daniel UDOH Falls Prevention Training
Nederostek Kate DHHS Program Mgr/Caregiver Program
Newton Sheri Voting rights specialist
Ngata Marie UDOH Health Hotline
Nguyen Christine UDOH Medicaid State-Housing Coord
Noonan Erika Medical Provider
North Christie CCPP Grant Project Coordinator
Obray Cathleen Geriatrician
Openshaw Jeri Utah State Library Division
Ormsby Alan AARP Utah State Director
Oseguera Libby ED - Utah Devlpmntl and Disabilities
Ott Sharon Citizen Advocate
Pace Brad Utah Academy of Physician Assistants
Pankow Becca Children's Service Society of Utah
Parker Deborah Home Care Services
Pearson Cory Dept of Vet Affairs - Services Coord
Pena Nubia Office of Multicultural Affairs
Thatcher Daniel W. Utah Senate
Thomas Shonna WINGS Program Coordinator
Thomas Wendy Dir of Parks, Events - Herriman City
Thurston Norm Utah House
Troumbley Patrick Seniors Blue Book
Turnquist Cindy Five County Advisory Board - Kane Co
Utz Rebecca U Dept of Social Work
Van De Graff Arie UDOH Commodty Spplmntl Food Prog
Vesely Collin Webmaster
Vickers Evan J. Utah Senate
Wade Heidi Weber Human Services, Senior Companions
Wahlen Jake Helpful Village.com
Ward Ray Utah House
Wassom Bob Free-Lance Writer and UCOA Blogger
Watson Clay Utah Association for Home Care
White Lee Citizen Advocate
Wilkes Michelle Utah Courts WINGS
Wilson Laura Creative Aging Coordinator UMFA
Wilson Troy Elder Law Attorney
Wittwer Andrew VA General Caregiver Support Program
Woolsey Sarah AUCH Medical Director

UCOA Quarterly Summit Agendas/Topics

Complete packets and recordings of meetings can be found at <https://ucoa.utah.edu/meetings.php>.

All meetings are virtual and open to the public.
Average Attendance = 60+ Members/Partners
All Meeting Conducted by Commission Chair

Throughout the 2023–2024 fiscal year, the Utah Commission on Aging (UCOA) hosted a series of Quarterly Summits as required by statute, providing a platform for partner engagement, legislative updates, educational sessions, and collaborative planning around aging-related issues in Utah.



The **Summer Quarterly Summit** was held virtually via Zoom on August 10, 2023, drawing over 60 participants. Executive Director Rob Ence opened the meeting with updates on the Master Plan for Aging (MPA) and announcements of several upcoming partner events. The meeting marked the introduction of Dr. Darlene Curley of Park City as the new Chair of UCOA. A featured presentation was led by former Salt Lake City Police Chief Chris Burbank, now Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at the Center for Policing Equity, who conducted an active shooter training and facilitated a conversation on public safety. The summit concluded with a discussion focused on foundational competencies in older adult mental health, led by Laura Donnan from the E4 Center and Bronwyn Keefe from the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Disparities in Aging at Rush University Medical Center.

The **Fall Quarterly Meeting** convened on December 5, 2023, under the leadership of Chair Curley and Executive Director Ence. The session welcomed new appointees to UCOA: Joel Macey (CNS), Jeri Openshaw (Utah Division of Libraries), and Dennis Lifferth (Tech Charities). Additional appointments, including Department of Workforce Services Director Casey Cameron, were noted as pending, moving UCOA closer to meeting its statutory membership requirements. Partner updates followed, featuring Kim Correa from Salt Lake Valley Habitat for Humanity, Becky Utz reporting on the National Alliance for Caregivers conference, and Amy Anderson on the MPA Center for Health Care Strategies, a cohort event. A major portion of the meeting was devoted to reviewing the draft Master Plan for Aging. Ence facilitated the discussion and encouraged attendees to share the public review link, submit feedback, and consider volunteering for the newly forming outcomes and measures committee. Dr. Tim Farrell provided expert commentary on age-friendly ecosystems and health care models, tying into the MPA's broader themes.

The **Winter Quarterly Summit**, held on February 22, 2024, coincided with the Utah legislative session and drew a record attendance of 75 participants. Chair Curley welcomed the new appointee Casey Cameron, officially joining the Commission. The summit featured a legislative overview with critical updates from Nels Holmgren (DAAS), Alan Ormsby (AARP), and Stacey Kulp (Alzheimer's Association), highlighting

key bills and concerns, particularly around Medicaid funding and waiver programs. While UCOA did not sponsor legislation directly this session, the most essential service funding was preserved or increased. The summit also spotlighted community partner programs and encouraged support for the state's aging needs assessment survey. The educational segment was led by Dr. Candice Daniel, a Geropsychologist, who addressed the critical gaps and needs in statewide mental health access for older adults.

The **Spring Quarterly Summit** took place on May 15, 2024, with a slightly smaller group of around 45 attendees. The meeting opened with a briefing on the successful Advance Care Planning Summit and a preview of the upcoming Utah Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference scheduled for June 13. Key issues discussed included housing challenges, adult exploitation, and creative engagement for older adults. Traci Lee led the housing conversation, while Jason Bowcutt and Emily Christensen promoted participation in the Creative Arts training and Utah Creative Aging Coalition, respectively. Jeri Openshaw invited input on a new UCOA “elevator speech” for broader outreach. Holmgren and Ormsby returned to provide a legislative wrap-up. Supporting materials for Dr. Supiano’s research initiative were distributed.



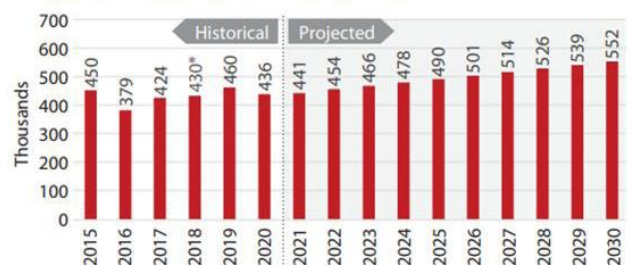
A special highlight of the spring summit was the address by Representative Dr. Ray Ward, who spoke candidly about Medicaid waivers, the legislative process, and his ongoing advocacy for aging-related funding and programs. His insights into housing policy and legislative strategy were particularly valuable. Following his presentation, a panel discussion explored the multifaceted implications of Medicaid waiver programs. The panel featured Josip Ambrenac (Utah State Medicaid), Carrie Schonlaw (AAA Five County), and Allie Spangler (Utah Health Care Association), representing program administration, case management, and provider perspectives. Their contributions provided a comprehensive overview of the risks and needs facing Utah’s aging population.

Through these quarterly gatherings, UCOA continued to facilitate meaningful dialogue, advance its strategic priorities, and strengthen partnerships that support aging Utahns.

Master Plan for Aging (MPA)

The Utah Commission on Aging (UCOA) led statewide efforts to develop and implement Utah’s Master Plan for Aging (MPA), a comprehensive framework to guide policies and strategies supporting older adults across the state. Over the past year, Utah has made significant progress, positioning itself as a national leader among the 10-state Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) collaborative cohort.

The Number of Family Caregivers is Expected to Increase as Utah’s Population Ages and Grows, 2015–2030



Note: Data are unavailable for Utah in 2018; count shown for 2018 is an estimate.
Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (data) and the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute (analysis).

Utah stands out in the cohort for having secured both a statutory request from the legislature and a formal letter of endorsement from the Governor—achievements not yet reached by many peer states. Additionally, the structure and inclusivity of UCOA's stakeholder engagement process have served as a model for others. These accomplishments were shared nationally in presentations to the Council of State Governments and at national convenings, where Utah, alongside Pennsylvania, discussed the best practices and lessons learned in developing an MPA, including efforts to strengthen the long-term care workforce.

Significant milestones over the reporting period included finalizing the initial draft of the MPA and engaging in multiple rounds of public and stakeholder feedback beginning in late 2023. The working title for the plan, "*Utah for the Ages*", reflected its comprehensive vision. Despite early delays, UCOA successfully reset the legislative reporting schedule and is on track for completion of key components, including outcome definitions and accountability structures.

Six issue-specific strategy teams launched in early 2024 to refine outcome measures and data metrics are working under a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) dashboard. UCOA secured a grant to acquire the dashboard tracker Clear Impact to be purchased and implemented in the next fiscal year through the Smith Family Charitable Trust. Concurrently, UCOA is working with state partners including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Utah Association of Area Agencies on Aging (U4A), and the Utah Action Coalition to integrate related initiatives, such as falls prevention and digital equity, into the MPA.

Public engagement has been ongoing through the UCOA website and facilitated through tools like POLCO to assess community needs. The website is refreshed periodically to enhance user navigation and accessibility to MPA updates, with a dedicated section for tracking progress and gathering ongoing feedback. Final content and metrics will be completed by Fall 2025 with a formal presentation of the MPA and its three-year priority agenda planned for the late 2025 interim legislative session.



In partnership with CHCS, Utah's MPA team has also explored funding opportunities to support implementation and long-term sustainability. A federal digital equity grant decision is pending, which may further strengthen the plan's reach. The collaborative relationship with CHCS, which ended in May 2024, continued to be a valuable resource for strategy alignment and resource development.

As Utah moves from planning to implementation, the MPA will remain a dynamic, living document—responsive to ongoing input and evolving needs. It will serve as both a strategic guide and a public accountability framework, aligning stakeholders statewide around shared goals for healthy and dignified aging.

For updates, timelines, and access to the dashboard, visit www.utahaging.org.

Sponsored Events and Advocacy Work

The Utah Commission on Aging (UCOA) continued its commitment to education, collaboration, and policy engagement throughout the 2023–2024 fiscal year through a series of impactful events and advocacy efforts.

8th Annual Advance Care Planning Summit

Held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, the 8th Annual Advance Care Planning (ACP) Summit drew 206 participants and was hailed as a great success.

The summit featured a keynote address by Dr. Rebecca Sudore of the University of California – San Francisco, who provided an insightful overview of the PREPARE application and its role in facilitating ACP conversations and documentation. The event centered around the critical theme of ACP documentation across the lifespan, with a specific focus on the legal changes that occur at age 18 and the need for age-inclusive planning.



Stacey Wallencheck of Intermountain Healthcare Palliative Care shared a moving personal narrative, while Executive Director Ence moderated a panel of experts including Wallencheck, Troy Wilson, JD; Emmie Gardner of Catholic Charities; and Matt Hansen from the Home and Hospice Association of Utah. Discussions explored barriers to initiating ACP conversations, strategies for more inclusive and accessible resources, and the importance of plain-language communication. The summit reinforced the need for ACP awareness and engagement at all stages of adulthood.

Utah Elder Abuse Awareness Day – 4th Annual

UCOA hosted and co-sponsored the fourth annual Utah Elder Abuse Awareness Day, in June 2024, continuing its mission to build awareness, foster community partnerships, and disseminate vital resources. This year's program focused on the intersection of housing insecurity and elder abuse, highlighting how housing affordability challenges can increase the risk of exploitation among older adults.

Four featured speakers shared their expertise and lived experiences:

- **Carol Hollowell** of SwitchPoint Community Resource Center spoke about homelessness among older adults and innovative housing solutions underway.
- **Lee White**, retired AARP executive and former SLCo housing coordinator, examined the historical and systemic roots of housing inequities and institutional abuse.
- **Tara Rollins** from the Utah Housing Coalition presented critical data on housing affordability, inventory shortages, and how bureaucratic systems can be manipulated for fraud.
- **Preston Cochran** of The Other Side Village provided insight into current supportive housing projects and the broader need to address housing vulnerability among aging populations.

The virtual event drew 125 participants, underscoring sustained interest and engagement in protecting Utah's older adults from abuse and neglect.

National Advocacy – NAC Caregiver Nation Conference

UCOA Executive Director Ence joined a delegation including Dr. Becky Utz, Jennifer Morgan, Dr. Nancy Allen, and Mary Urie from the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council at the National Alliance for Caregiving's **Caregiver Nation Summit** in Washington, D.C. This gathering of leaders from six partner states emphasized collaborative strategy development to better support family caregivers. The Utah team met with congressional staff from Representatives Moore and Curtis, and Senators Romney and Lee to advocate for ongoing support of the R.A.I.S.E. Act and related federal caregiving initiatives. These conversations were instrumental in raising Utah's voice in national policy discussions.

Legislative Session and Organizational Updates

While UCOA did not sponsor major legislation during the 2024 session, key administrative updates were advanced. These included a proposed statutory revision to reflect the restructuring of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and an update to the reporting deadlines related to the Master Plan on Aging. Additionally, efforts to align commission membership with new gubernatorial appointments are underway. UCOA also submitted its annual appropriations request and plans to pursue additional grant opportunities to support upcoming projects.



Commission Appointments

UCOA welcomed three new statutory members this year, strengthening the commission's multidisciplinary expertise:

- **Joel Macey**, of Community Nursing Services (CNS), brings experience from his previous hospice leadership at IHC.
- **Jeri Openshaw**, from the Utah State Library Division, adds deep knowledge in media accessibility and cultural programming.
- **Dennis Lifferth**, representing Tech Charities, leads initiatives to refurbish and redistribute technology to underserved populations across the state.

Two additional nominations are in progress, coordinated with Nubia Peña of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and Casey Cameron, Director of Workforce Services. UCOA anticipates a fully appointed commission by mid-December, marking the first time all statutory positions have been filled since the expansion of the governing statute.

Community Partner Engagements

Throughout 2023–24, the Utah Commission on Aging (UCOA) demonstrated an expansive and strategic commitment to community partnership and engagement, strengthening collaborative networks and advancing statewide initiatives related to aging.



Executive Director Rob Ence continued to play a central role in shaping dialogue and building partnerships across a diverse array of sectors. In collaboration with Mon Ami, Ence co-developed a concept for a professional resource referral program to be integrated into the UtahAging.org virtual ecosystem. He also introduced Mon Ami to Trualta, an online caregiver resource platform, and facilitated progress reviews with U4A on technology adoption. In a related effort, Ence met with the Executive Director of the Home Health Association of Utah (HHAU) to discuss caregiver tool development and to gain feedback on UCOA's website and caregiver content, reinforcing the Commission's broader role across the aging spectrum.

Significant contributions were made through engagement with policy and regulatory partners. Ence remained active with WINGS, a collaborative focused on guardianship issues, working to refine legislative language and update policy. He also maintained momentum with state agencies on developing a POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment) registry, advancing toward a potential solution with renewed state interest and new partnerships.

UCOA took part in the UGEC HRSA site accreditation visit for College of Nursing gerontology programs, and Ence maintained regular attendance at U4A monthly meetings. A consistent presence in the policy space, UCOA presented at the Rocky Mountain Geriatrics Conference and contributed to a National Alliance for Caregiving study group in Washington, D.C., including Hill visits in late 2024. UCOA has also played a key role in planning events such as Salt Lake City's Senior Day and Awards Event and the first annual "Celebration for the Ages," planned for downtown SLC.

Strategic planning and academic collaboration have also been central to UCOA's efforts. Ence, along with UCOA Chair Darlene Curley, engaged in long-term strategic conversations regarding the Master Plan for Aging (MPA) and funding priorities. UCOA worked with University of Utah School of Architecture colleagues on a PCORI development grant focused on evaluating age-friendly interventions. Additional academic engagements included lectures with University of Utah social work students, support of USU's Better Way Forward initiative on women's health, and the launch of a quarterly collaboration with gerontology leaders across higher education institutions to support MPA coordination and resource sharing.

UCOA's support and commitment to Advance Care Planning (ACP) culminated in planning the 8th Annual ACP Summit, anchored by keynote speaker Dr. Rebecca Sudore. UCOA is assuming greater leadership in this partnership following Comagine Health's loss of federal funding. Ence also led discussions with DHHS regarding the ACP registry RFI, and with legislators like Rep. Ray Ward on building stronger support for Medicaid waivers and home-based services, which remain underfunded and at risk.

UCOA maintained active involvement with emerging coalitions, including the Utah Digital Equity Coalition, Utah Living Well Coalition, and Broadband Alliance, emphasizing the digital inclusion of older adults. Ence collaborated with Salt Lake City housing specialists on homelessness initiatives, supported and facilitated the E4 Region 8 Policy Academy's integration with the MPA, and worked with local AAA offices such as BRAG and Cache County on advisory alignment.

UCOA contributed to statewide public awareness campaigns in partnership with APS and DAAS, including monthly efforts to combat fraud, and provided leadership in the Parkinson's Advisory Strategy Committee at the University of Utah. The Commission supported training initiatives for artists working with older adults through the Division of

Arts and Museums and participated in the Utah Arts Huddle and Lifetime Arts forums to explore intergenerational creative aging programs.

Notable statewide recognition included participation in the Governor's Centenarian Celebration, attendance at the AGS dinner honoring Dr. Mark Supiano, and coverage in Deseret News offering public guidance on end-of-life procedures.

Finally, UCOA celebrated the conclusion of its participation in the CHCS MPA Learning Collaborative, positioning Utah as a national

leader in aging policy and contributing to the national planning process. The Commission's partnerships continue to foster innovation, community connection, and systemic change—advancing the vision of aging well for all Utahns.





UtahAging.org

Utah Commission on Aging

Contact Information

www.utahaging.org
utahaging@gmail.com

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rob.ence@utah.edu

Darlene Curley

UCOA Chair

Collin Vesely

Web Development
Social Media
Graphic Design

Heather Podolan

Administrative Assistance

