

Kern County Commission On Aging

Judy Snyder, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 868-1054; (661) 868-1001 FAX



REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

MINUTES

January 26, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.

East Niles Senior Center
6601 Niles Street, Bakersfield, CA 93306
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed, and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian, ****Secretary)*

Commission Members Present:

In Person – Susan Bodnar, Vivian Cao, Sonia Dhillon, Anabel Griffin, Julie Juarez-Ceja, **Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting), Yolanda Prado, Christie Ray, Miguel Salazar, Yarnell Sherrell, *Judy Snyder

Virtually – None.

Excused Absences: Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, Norma Jackson, Jami Ward

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator
Julie Baca – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator
Angela Domingos – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person: Roy Scarrazo, Joan Bryant, Michael Romero, Miguel Zuniga, Shawn Caswell, Pat Edgerle, Dianne Clagg, Lisa Pollard, Gonsuelo Subio, Daisy Neri, Gayla Hughes, Maria Saldate, Peggy Langels, Catherine Vasquez

Virtually: Chad Acker, Sara Swertfager, Hermandeep Dhaliwal

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Card from AASD Staff thanking the COA for the cookies & gifts during Employee Appreciation Days, and for the donated gift cards.
2. Resignation of Commissioner Duquette.
3. Letters sent to Board of Supervisors recommending appointment of Suzanne Gray and Julie Parsons.
4. CSL Joint Rules Committee announcing elections for CSL Senior Senator & Senior Assemblymember. All applications are due to AASD Secretary, Laura Juarez, by March 31st.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

1. Lisa Pollard thanked the Commission on Aging for meeting at the senior center and asked to know what the Commission does, its history, and how she can help or apply to be a Commissioner. Chair Snyder answered that the Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors representing older adults of Kern County. They meet monthly (dark in August & December) at various senior centers throughout Kern County assessing and studying needs of older adults. The Commission was established 50 years ago.

Candidates can apply online:

<https://kerncounty.seamlessdocs.com/w/BCCApplicationForm> or if they don't want to apply online, they can request an application from the Clerk of the Board by calling 661-868-3585, or email: clerkoftheboard@kerncounty.com.

Commissioner Comments :

- Chair Snyder announced that there will be a brief COA Foundation meeting immediately following today's meeting.
- Chair Snyder sadly shared the passing of former Commissioner, William "Bill" Wright. He had a passion for helping the elder community and will be missed.
- Commissioner Dhillon shared that she had a meeting with the Mayor in Arvin, who expressed a strong interest in reopening the senior center in Arvin. Jeremy asked that the Mayor contact him to discuss further.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve November 17, 2025, Regular Commission on Aging meeting minutes as presented.
Motion: Juarez-Ceja; **Second:** Lemucchi; **Abstention:** Cao, Sherrell; **Objection:** None.
Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF HONORARY COMMISSIONER:** Motion was made to appoint Gloria Brown as an Honorary Commissioner.
Motion: Prado; **Second:** Linder; **Abstention:** None; **Objection:** None.
Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

EAST NILES SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos reported that there is a regular attendance of 25-30 seniors who come in daily to congregate at the East Niles Senior Center to have lunch, 26 today. The meals are delivered fresh daily as they are prepared at the Richard Prado Senior Center kitchen. These regular attendees are also the 12 volunteers mentioned earlier. They help with setting up the activities that take place here such as on Monday's table games and pool from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Tuesdays, they join for gospel music and singing from 10:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m. On Wednesdays, there is exercise class from 10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. along with table games and pool from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Thursday offers Bible study from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. along with table games and pool from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Fridays, they participate in crafts from 10:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. along with table games and pool from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Everyday there is an ongoing jigsaw puzzle in progress, as well as books to read.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Isaac Preston
Not in attendance. No report.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Jose Lopez reported they continue to operate uninterrupted at this time. The department received an average of 99 client inquiries a day in 2025, and they continue to strive for a quick turnaround for any inquiry received. Efforts to increase outreach through a volunteer program are still moving forward. They recently received approval for use of county vehicles by volunteer staff, so they'll be able to increase their presence not just in the greater Bakersfield area, but also in the outlying areas of Kern. If you or someone you know requires assistance, please call them at: (661) 868-7300, or email Kernvets@kerncounty.com.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara attended virtually and reported there are no new vaccination recommendations. Seasonal Flu and COVID vaccines continue to be routinely recommended. Two doses of COVID vaccine six months apart are recommended for adults 65 and older. RSV

continues to be recommended once in a lifetime for adults > 75 years of age and high-risk individuals 50-74 years. To receive any of these vaccines through the Public Health Clinic, please call 661-321-3000 to make an appointment.

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) – Chad Acker

Chad Acker attended virtually and gave the following report:

Housing Program Changes (Effective January 1, 2026)

- KernBHRS partnered with Kern Health Systems, Anthem, and Kaiser to offer a new Transitional Rent benefit.
- Eligible members must:
 - Be enrolled in one of these Managed Care Plans.
 - Meet criteria for specialty behavioral health services.
 - Be experiencing homelessness.
- Transitional Rent provides up to 6 months of housing assistance.
- This funding must be used first before determining eligibility for any additional KBHRS housing support beyond the 6 months.
- Transitional Rent can only be used at:
 - Room & Board (R&B) facilities
 - Sober Living Environments (SLE)
- Transitional Rent cannot be used at:
 - Adult Residential Facilities (ARF)
 - Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE)
- Emphasis is being placed in compliance with new requirements to ensure access to this funding.
- The goal is to improve housing stability to better support treatment and recovery.

NAMI Family-to-Family Program

- An 8-week educational and support program for individuals caring for a loved one with serious mental illness.
- Focuses on:
 - Better communication
 - Navigating mental health crises
 - Effective self-care strategies
 - Understanding how mental illness impacts families
- Starts: February 11, 2026
- Time: 6:00–8:00 PM
- Location: Zoom
- Registration deadline: January 28, 2026
- Contact: namikern@yahoo.com

Departmental Team Changes

- Recovery and Wellness Center (RAWC) teams will be transitioning to contract providers, such as:
 - Clinica Sierra Vista
 - Clarvida
- These teams will continue serving the adult population.
- The WISE team (serving individuals who are 60 and older) will remain within KernBHRS.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Daisy Neri

Daisy Neri shared the following Medi-Cal Policy Change regarding Reinstatement of Asset Limits for Non-MAGI Medi-Cal Programs:

Effective January 1, 2026, the asset test has been reinstated for:

- Non-MAGI programs, including the
 - Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) and
 - Long-Term Care (LTC) programs,

The following Non-MAGI programs will continue to be exempt from property/asset limits:

- Pickle,
- Disabled Adult Child (DAC), and
- Disabled Widow/er (DW) programs.

Impacted Population:

- New NON-MAGI population
 - Individuals applying for Medi-Cal benefits under the affected Non-MAGI programs with an application date after January 1, 2026
- Existing NON-MAGI populations
 - Members with annual renewals are due on or after January 2026.

The new asset limits are:

- The limit is \$130,000 for one person
- Add \$65,000 for each additional family member (up to 10 people)

Assets include:

- Bank accounts:
 - The available balance of all bank and credit union accts
- Cash:
 - Cash on hand is exempt when the client states that the cash on hand is processed from their current month's income. If not exempt, cash on hand is countable as property.
- Property:

- Boats, motorcycles etc.
- Stocks, bonds and mutual funds
- Trusts
- Life insurance
 - The cash surrender value (CSV) of the life insurance policy for each individual
- Burial Plots
- Vehicles:
 - If the client has more than one vehicle, he/she may choose which vehicle is exempt.
- Business property:
 - Any property regardless of value, that is used in a business.
- Some assets don't count, like the home you live in, one vehicle, household items, irrevocable burial funds and certain savings, like retirement accounts.

Annual Renewals:

Members with annual renewals due on or after January 1, 2026, are required to report (self-attest) or provide verification of their assets as part of the eligibility determination.

Human Services Technicians (HST) process:

- NON-MAGI RE packet provided:
 - Staff must attempt to contact the client to obtain a self-attestation of assets.
 - If contact is established with the client:
 - ✓ Capture self-attestation of all assets via narrative/journal entry.
 - ✓ Update CalSAWS property list page with the minimum necessary info to accept self-attestation
 - ✓ No additional verification should be requested. HST can proceed to process the MC Renewal.
 - If contact is NOT established with the client:
 - ✓ Issue the new MC604 IPS available via CalSAWS with an MC 355 and allow 30 days to provide.

Eligibility must be approved for an Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) Long-Term Care (LTC) and Non-LTC applicant who self-attests that the combined value of their assets is below the asset limits of \$130,000 for one person and \$65,000.00 for each additional person.

The Asset Verifications Report (AVP) Desk Guide provides the minimum necessary information to accept self-attestation.

Additional details will be provided once the AVP report for NON LTC clients becomes available in CalSAWS in the coming months.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels attended in person and reported they are still enrolling participants in their Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Grant. This grant runs through 3/31/2027 and is to assist laid off oil and gas workers with finding new employment or entering a training program that will hopefully replace their current wage rates. Job opportunities and recruitments can be found on their website, www.America'sJobCenterofKern.com and their Facebook page. The weekly Job Hub is held in person at the Recruitment Center, 1215 Olive Dr., Suite C in Bakersfield every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. Job Developers announce new jobs and upcoming recruitments for the week, as well as having an employer present and highlighted weekly. Veteran's Job Club is held online and in person every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. at the Southeast AJCC. If you know someone that is interested in training, they have in person orientations on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. at the Southeast America's Job Center of California (AJCC) and Virtual Orientations on Thursday's at 9:30 a.m. There are many workshops being held on a weekly basis through the AJCC's partner Employment Development Department (EDD); Mock Interviews, The Expungement Process, Veteran's Job Club Workshop, State Employment Workshops, and CalJOBS Virtual Workshops. Employer's Training Resource (ETR) website is located at <https://www.employerstrainingresource.com/> and the AJCC Workshop is located at <https://www.americasjobcenterofkern.com/>. Service, Employment, and Redevelopment (SER) Jobs in the southeast office will take applications but they have posted that they are over-enrolled at this time. Person to contact is Deborah McDade and she can be reached by phone at 661-635-2792 or email: dmcdade@sercalifornia.org.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez appeared in person and gave the following report:

Home Access Grant:

ADA grant for wheelchair ramp, grab bars, and walk-in shower for low-income disabled persons. Owner-occupied and rental property are eligible if the property owner agrees to the work. An inspection is completed to determine specific needs, and all work is done by licensed contractors.

Home Improvement Loan:

Replace air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, windows, insulation, floors, and paint. Available to low-income owner-occupied single-family residence. Zero interest, deferred payment loan due and payable in full when the owner no longer occupies the property.

Anyone interested can contact their office at 661-862-5024. Flyers for both programs were distributed to attendees. Mobile Homes are not eligible for the program. Commissioner Griffen shared that for those who do not qualify for these programs, they can call 2-1-1 for additional resources. CAPK has resources to help pay for utilities and minor home repairs.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Hermandeep Dhawali

Hermandeep Dhawali attended virtually and gave the following report:

ILCKC has been actively distributing Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)

materials throughout the community by engaging in both local and rural outreach efforts. They ensure that every call received is informed about ADRC services, facilitating efficient and effective connections to the resources individuals need. With assistance from Aging & Adult Services, they recently added 10 new extended community partners to the ADRC extended partnership list. Both Jeremy and Hermandeep will update these new extended partners on the Kern County Aging & Disability Resource Connection website. Regarding ILCKC news, they received a \$15,000 grant from the Friends of Mercy Foundation in June 2025 to repair and refurbish equipment for elderly and disabled individuals. On December 10, 2025, they held a press conference at their office to announce this grant and to request community donations of equipment, as their existing supply had significantly diminished and their waiting list for equipment was growing. As a direct result of the press conference, subsequent media coverage, and publicity campaign, they received 47 new calls from individuals interested in donating equipment. Their team worked throughout the month to respond to these inquiries, and they are pleased to report that their equipment supply has been replenished. They expect to eliminate the current waiting list this month, including providing power mobility devices to at least seven individuals. To date, in fiscal year 2025-2026, they have provided 35 pieces of equipment to consumers and 57 pieces to agencies serving people with disabilities. This surpasses their Friends of Mercy Foundation Grant goal of donating 15 pieces of equipment to individuals with disabilities. They have remaining funds to continue repairing equipment through the end of the grant period in July 2026. If any partners know someone who is elderly or has a disability in need of a wheelchair, walker, rollator, crutches, shower chair, or commode, please encourage them to contact them. They are happy to assist. They are still seeking lightly used or new durable medical equipment (DME) items, including power scooters, manual and electric wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility aids.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Kayla Pinkston

Kayla Pinkston was not in attendance but submitted a report about their Kern County Victim Services Unit (VSU) & Family Justice Centers. Jeremy Oliver read the following report:

- Victim Services Unit located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number 661-868-5960
 - District Attorney Advocates can assist all victims of crime through the criminal justice process
 - Court accompaniment
 - Case Updates
 - California Victims of Crime Compensation application assistance
 - Prosecution & Law Enforcement Accompaniment
 - Victim Impact Statements and Restitution
- Family Justice Center also located at 1300 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301
 - Phone number: 661-868-5950
 - Walk ins– 8am to 4pm
 - Assists Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking
 - Partners on site include:

- Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA)
- Open Door Network
- Kern County Department of Human Services
- Kern County Child Support (kiosk)
- Partners off-site include
- BHRS
- Women's Center High Desert
- South Family Justice Center - 12022 Main St, Lamont CA 93241
 - Phone number: Lamont- 661-868-5820

Both programs have access to language lines and intakes can be taken over the phone for those who are not able to come into our facilities for initial services. If anyone has questions, they can call the Program Coordinator Adriana Cuadras Talamantez 661-868-5956 or Program Supervisor Kayla Pinkston 661-868-5955.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS - AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

We are awaiting the passage of a continuing resolution that expires January 30, 2026. Full Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits resumed in all states and will be in place through September 2026, even if a shutdown occurs. HR1 impacts will begin to be seen this year. We are hearing that a deal has been reached but awaiting votes.

STATE

The Governor released his budget report. Budget revenues came in higher than expected with estimated amount of \$42.3 Billion or 6.7 percent over the three budget years. Noted that the budget came in higher due to the artificial intelligence boom and investor enthusiasm. The State still projects a \$2.9 Billion shortfall and will suspend a \$2.8 Billion deposit to the Budget Stabilization Account or commonly referred to as the "Rainy Day Fund". This is significantly less than what the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) forecasts as an \$18 Billion dollar deficit.

The State projects fewer recipients of Medi-Cal as results of changes to HR1 (14.5 million currently to 14 million) occurring in fiscal year 2026/27. The IHSS caseload is anticipated to grow by 10 percent in fiscal year 2025/26 and 8 percent for fiscal year 2026/27. Key shifts in funding are:

- Alignment of the Residual Program with Medi-Cal Coverage estimated to save \$86 million in General fund. Meaning IHSS cases will automatically term or suspend when the Medi-Cal is terminated.
- Elimination of the Back-Up Provider System (BUPS) a \$3.5 million savings due to low use.

- CFCO Penalties continue estimated to be a saving of \$40.5 million in current year and \$92.1 million in 2026/27. Reminder costs shift to 100 percent county for the penalty starting July 1. Currently only 50 percent.
- Anticipates a County Base Administration increase of around \$35.1 million from current year to next year.
- Anticipates savings to IHSS program of \$37.9 million this fiscal year and \$525.1 million next fiscal year related to the changes in Medi-Cal eligibility. Which equates to 2,171 less recipients in current year and 15,509 in the next.
- Critical piece indicated is the plan to remove the States share of cost associated with growth in IHSS hours per case and shift those costs to the counties in the beginning of fiscal year 2027/28. Estimated to save the State \$233.6 million.

There is still a lot that can change in the coming May revise, and our department will be monitoring the status of these changes and impacts to our clients.

DEPARTMENT

Adult Protective Services (APS) has been allocated additional Home Safe funding allowing the program to continue. This funding allows APS clients to access services to prevent or resolve issues of homelessness.

The Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) completed open enrollment period. Also, of note the State has indicated plans to allocate additional funding to the program.

Implementation of the expanded definition of Grave Disability became effective January 1, 2026, statewide. The expanded definition applies to involuntary treatment for people with mental health disorders. The expanded definition now includes severe substance use disorders and medical risks as part of the criteria when looking at if a person can take care of their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter due to these disorders. This has impacts on the Conservatorship programs and we will see if there is an increase in the volume of referrals and conservatorships established in the coming months and years. There will also be potential legal challenges to the expanded definition, and the department will need to exercise caution in applying the expanded definitions.

The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Community First Choice Option (CFCO) penalty has been greatly reduced (estimate about 6 cases out of compliance), and the department will continue to address these cases as high priority to minimize the penalty to the department/county. Penalty totals as of the end of December is \$287,209.28. We are pivoting to try to address the pending applications and other reassessments that are overdue. Challenges faced are high volume and staffing to keep up with the workload.

Commissioner Prado added that this is why it's the Commission's responsibility in August and December to go and tell the Aging and Adult Services employees how much they are appreciated, so please keep this in mind when the time comes to asking Commissioners to come and be present because they deserve our thanks for all the work they do for seniors and adults with disabilities.

The Ombudsman program has new volunteer classes starting and the department is opening Request for Proposals to assume the program.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar

No report.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi, J. Snyder

No report.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez

Commissioner Gomez was not in attendance but provided the following report that was read by Jeremy Oliver:

Recently Reappointed:

None.

New Appointments:

1. Yarnell Sherrell – appointed by GBLA, term expires 11/08/2026
2. Vivian Cao – appointed by District 1, term expires 06/17/2026
3. Jami Ward – appointed by District 1, term expires 05/04/2027

Resignations/Retiring:

1. Anthony Estrada – Effective 12/08/2025
2. Doris Duquette – Effective 01/14/2026

Expired Terms:

1. Yolanda Prado, term expired 09/08/2025 – In Process
2. Barbara Goodlow – In Process
3. Ellen Linder – In Process

Laura is working on sending letters to the appointing entities. Commissioners can continue serving until they are reappointed.

Vacancies:

1. District 2 - for term expiring 06/17/2026 (replacing Gloria Brown)
2. District 2 – for term expiring 09/29/2027
3. District 3 – for term expiring 09/22/2027
4. District 5 – for term expiring 06/17/2027
5. Around the Clock Care – for term expiring 08/07/2027 (replacing Jane Decker)

New Applications Received:

None.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for January 2026.

Chair Snyder welcomed new Commissioner Sherrell and Commissioner Cao and asked them to provide a little background, their roles, and interest to serve on the Commission on Aging. Commissioner Sherrell shared that she works for Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, which is free legal aid in Kern County. She works in the Seniors Law Center, where they serve people 60 years and older that live in Kern County. If they have landlord-tenant issues, some consumer matters, or need assistance with small claims matters, or if you're being sued and you just need assistance with filing your answers, just come on in. On Wednesdays, they accept walk-ins on a first-come, first-served basis. She has over 20 years of being an advocate for seniors. She is here by way of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Commissioner Cao shared that she works for Supervisor Jeff Flores. She was appointed by Supervisor Phillip Peters District 1, and even though she serves District 3, which is the eastside and metro Bakersfield, Oildale areas, the Supervisors and staff all talk to each other. All five supervisors regularly exchange ideas and resources. She's been around about four and a half years and has a decent grasp on the key influential policy makers as far as who to reach out to if they need help here. She has a lot of connections to the State Senate because she worked there for three and a half years, and so if she could be a resource in any way, shape, or form to fellow commissioners and/or the city or community, please don't hesitate to reach out. She's very interested in helping with the Master Plan on Aging. Part of the reason she wanted to be on this commission specifically is because by the year 2030, a fourth of our California population will be a part of that silver tsunami, meaning 60 and over, and we will need to prepare ourselves for whatever the resources will look like at that time, and it looks like it's going to be less than what we have now, and so to have that pre-emptive plan with our colleagues, with community input would be really important. She hopes that the Commission will accept her with a little bit of patience, because it's a new kind of hat that she's wearing, but she is willing to learn. If you have any insight, or if you have any problems that you're already seeing, she'd love to see how the county can help with that.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – E. Linder

No report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; S. Gomez; J. Lemucchi; Y. Prado; C. Ray; J. Snyder

Chair Snyder reported that the Executive Committee met January 7th and discussed the logistics of the beginning of the year and the concern about Commissioner vacancies and making sure they get filled. All candidate applications have been sent to the Board of Supervisors for their review and consideration of appointment. We do need representation in the west and north Kern areas. They also reviewed the list of Operating Committees and noted some gaps in the committees. If you are interested in serving on a new Operating Committee or Ad Hoc committee, please let her know. As a reminder, all Commissioners must serve on at least one committee and no more than three committees. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4th.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – A. Griffin

Commissioner Griffin reported the committee met January 15th and a lot of the information and IHSS numbers Jeremy provided in his report is what was shared with the committee.

There is a great need for members on the committee. If you know of any care providers or consumers, please encourage them to apply. She also invited everyone to attend one of the meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of every other month. The next meeting will be March 19th at Aging and Adult Services. She ended her report with sharing that the IHSS staff are working very hard to get caught up on the backlog. The caseload in December went from 17,500 to 18,100 in just two weeks.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Dhillon; N. Jackson; C. Ray

Commissioner Dhillon reported she had an appointment scheduled with the Height Street Skilled Nursing Facility Director of Nursing and the Administrator, but they had to cancel. She decided to visit the facility anyway. Their CM rating is 2.0, which is not great but it's hard to grade them over time. Their Google rating is 3.5 to 4, and there were a lot of good comments, and some average comments were reviewed for the facility. Overall, the facility was very clean, well-organized, and menus were posted everywhere. The patients' charts were in their designated spots. It is run by Corporate now, which some staff shared that it is difficult communicating with families if an issue arises because they must go through Corporate first. They have a lot of CNA students so that is helpful to staff. Overall, it was a great visit.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE –J. Juarez-Ceja; M. Salazar; Y. Prado; J. Snyder

Commissioner Prado reported she will be scheduling new Commissioner orientation. The revised Commissioner handbook will be completed soon.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – S. Bodnar; B. Goodlow; A. Griffin; C. Ray

The Committee provided reports on the following senior centers:

- Parliamentarian Bodnar: The seniors in Ridgecrest are moving along and still trying to work things out but she is proud of the seniors there and how much they have taken control of the situation. She hasn't been in contact with the Lake Isabella Senior Center, but she will call to see how they are doing out there.

Chair Snyder added that for those who are not familiar with the other senior centers, they have many around the county, and they're all very active, but they all have individual problems and concerns, and that's what the Senior Center Advisory Committee and Commission listen to. They do have some advocates on the Commission who are not present today, but they are constantly paying attention to the senior centers. It's not just a matter of reporting out here, they are the eyes and ears, and so they pay attention to reports.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – E. Linder

Chair Snyder announced that Commissioner Linder will now be serving on this committee. Cards will be sent out as needed.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Dhillon; S. Gomez

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – J. Lemucchi; M. Salazar

Commissioner Salazar reported Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) held a Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (STACC) meeting on January 20th, 2026. He and Vice Chair Lemucchi attended this meeting, and the following were covered:

1. 5310 applications were reviewed by Caltrans and awards will be announced in several weeks. 5310 is a project list for the Small Urban and Rural Areas apportionments. Details about Kern County will be available by then.
2. Transit Operators are scheduled to discuss and complete "Unmet Transit Needs" report by May 2026. Martin Reynoso attended an AASD hearing about Senior unavailability of transit issues and lack of information/referral process to help Seniors find ways around transit issues.
3. Angela Willis from Kern Transit was present at the STACC meeting. Angela Willis provided her contact information and invited all to ask any questions or concerns regarding transportation issues for Seniors. Jan Lemucchi is planning to reach out to Angela and invite her to attend a future COA meeting to discuss transportation needs/concerns with our Seniors in the Kern County area.
4. Agency updates. Allowed attendees to share agency updates from their organization.

Today's STACC meeting was one of four meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION –E. Linder

Commissioner Linder shared that prior to the meeting, the Commission recognized 12 senior nutrition volunteers for their volunteerism. Volunteers will continue to be recognized as they visit different senior centers throughout the county.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- **2026 COA Executive Committee Meeting Schedule** – The Executive Committee meeting schedule for 2026 was approved. If you need a copy, please let Laura know.
- **Centenarian Recognition Program Parliamentarian** – Commissioner Ray shared that a total of 18 certificates were delivered in 2025. There are 2 pending for 2026:
 1. Maxin Scatena
 2. Endelva Troy

NEXT MEETINGS:

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 4, 2026 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, February 23, 2026 (Due to County Holiday on the 3rd Monday), at 1:00 p.m. Rasmussen Senior Center 115 E. Roberts Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93308 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj