



**September 24, 2025 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.**  
**The Grange, 2374 Alamo Pintado, Los Olivos, CA**

### **MINUTES**

**In-Person Attendance:** Lora Aladdin, Kristina Benchek, Sommer Concepcion, Renee Cowans, Cathy DeCaprio-Wells, Laura Deloye, Patty Flores, Crystal Gallo, Alma Hernandez, Amy Krueger, Rachel Lambert, De Rosenberry, Nitce Ruvalcaba, Emmanuel Verduzco, Sena Woodall, Babera Zasloff

**Virtual Attendance:** Tammy Casiano, Carlos Escobedo, Shannon Kenney, Kim Larsen, Adriana Marroquin, Gail Marshall, Glenn Novak, Jeff Palmer, Karin Stallwagen, Maria Vega, Hilda Zacarias

**Staff:** Barb Finch & Elizabeth Drake

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Barbara Finch called the meeting to order and welcomed members of Caring Together Santa Barbara County, the featured presenters for the meeting. She explained that the AAN is launching the implementation phase of the local Master Plan for Aging and will utilize meetings to explore key topics from the plan. Each meeting will focus on a specific theme, with a lead organization providing updates, gathering input, and engaging participants in activities to move the work forward. County departments will also share how their efforts support each goal area, and community solutions will be highlighted. Barbara noted that today's focus was on Caregiving. Attendees then introduced themselves and the agencies they represent.

#### **2. AAN Business Approve Minutes, July 23, 2025**

De Rosenberry motioned to approve the July 23, 2025 minutes and Alma Hernandez seconded the motion. There were no abstentions. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

#### **3. Public Comment/Announcements**

There were no public comments or announcements.

#### **4. Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging (SBC MPA): Focus on Caregiving**

- **Caregiving in the US Report, July 2025** – Barbara Finch opened her presentation by referencing the *Caregiving in the U.S.* report released in July 2025, which provides a national overview of caregiving trends and challenges. She noted that the issues highlighted in the report closely reflect what is being seen locally in Santa Barbara County. While the report is lengthy, the executive summary offers clear insights and recommendations to strengthen support for family caregivers through policy and program innovation.
- **State Initiatives for Caregiving 2025-2026** - Barbara reviewed recent updates to the California's *Master Plan for Aging (MPA)*, which includes "Caregiving that Works" as one of its five main goals. She highlighted that six caregiving initiatives were updated in August 2025 for fiscal years 2025–26, emphasizing collaboration, workforce training,

and equity. These state efforts are designed to strengthen the direct care workforce and ensure that caregiving resources reach underserved communities. The state is partnering with United Domestic Workers (UDW), community colleges, and community health workers to expand caregiver training and capacity.

- Initiatives focus on career development, retention, and mobility within the direct care workforce.
- The California Department of Aging (CDA) will re-release CalGrows training materials free of charge.
- A Caregiver Equity Roadmap is being developed to serve underrepresented and under-resourced populations.
- CalCARES continues outreach to raise awareness about caregiving needs and available supports.
- **Santa Barbara County Community Needs Assessment** - Barbara also discussed findings from the *Aging Well in Santa Barbara County* report and the local Master Plan for Aging community needs assessment. Through surveys and focus groups, the assessment gathered input from caregivers across the county. Results revealed high levels of caregiver stress and significant challenges in accessing support. Barbara emphasized the importance of creating stronger local networks and simplifying access to information and resources.
- **Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging (SBC MPA) Caregiving Objectives 2025-2030** - In outlining the local caregiving goals, Barbara highlighted the Santa Barbara County Master Plan for Aging's objectives for improving caregiver support and awareness. These priorities center on accessibility, cultural and linguistic inclusion, and workforce development for direct care providers.
  - Develop web-based caregiving information and tools for community use.
  - Promote language access and cultural relevance across caregiving materials.
  - Conduct outreach and education campaigns to help caregivers find and navigate local resources.
  - Strengthen career pathways and training for direct care service providers to improve workforce sustainability.

## 5. Caring Together Santa Barbara County (CTSBC)

- **California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI) Community Survey** - Emmanuel Verduzco from Caring Together Santa Barbara County (CTSBC) presented the Caregiver Community Survey, available on the CTSBC [website](#). The survey takes about five minutes to complete and is open to anyone with caregiving experience, not just current caregivers. Partners are encouraged to distribute it and can fill it out on behalf of their constituents. The survey gathers information on caregiver needs, tracks changes over time, and connects participants with resources while supporting proactive engagement and informed decision-making in the community.
- **Caring Together Santa Barbara County (CTSBC) Website – Resource Hub for Caregivers** – Emmanuel highlighted CTSBC's dedicated [website](#), which provides caregivers direct access to local resources and services, separate from the Family Service Agency site. Since April, the site has received around 1,800 visitors and includes a Spanish-language version to ensure bilingual access. Emmanuel and the CTSBC team collaborate with Promotores and community agencies to improve outreach and inclusivity, and the site features a “Become a Partner” tab to connect new organizations, strengthening local collaboration and resource navigation.
- **Implementation Update on Objectives** - Emmanuel reported on CTSBC's implementation of objectives aligned with the Master Plan for Aging, focusing on workforce development, caregiver training workshops, and partnerships with local home care agencies and community colleges. Emmanuel and the leadership team coordinate collaborative efforts, linking larger agencies with smaller providers and

promoting proactive engagement. Their initiatives emphasize equity and inclusion, addressing the needs of Spanish-speaking and LGBTQIA caregivers while building local caregiving capacity and professional development pathways.

## 6. Master Plan for Aging (MPA) Integration within County Departments

- **Update on In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)** – Cathy DeCaprio-Wells provided an overview of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and the Public Authority, which manages the registry of care providers. IHSS offers in-home assistance to eligible low-income clients to help them safely remain in their homes. While most recipients have a family member as a provider, additional caregivers are needed, especially in areas like the Santa Ynez Valley. IHSS matches recipients with approved providers, with the contract managed directly between them. Community partners, including Hilda Zacharias from Caring Together Santa Barbara County (CTSBC), emphasized the challenges of navigating IHSS and the importance of advocacy for both caregivers and care recipients. Partnerships with the United Domestic Workers (UDW) union, outreach through community colleges, senior expos, and recruitment materials aim to address the caregiver shortage as caseloads grow steadily.

## 7. Community-Based Caregiving Resources

- **Innerhive** - Crystal Gallo, Founder and Chief Empathy Officer at [innerhive](https://innerhive.com), a care management platform designed to simplify the complex task of coordinating care for loved ones, shared an overview of her innovative app. Innerhive was born from her personal caregiving experience and aims to support families and caregivers by reducing emotional burden, improving communication, and managing information overload. The app automatically captures and summarizes care conversations, tracks care events, medications, and equipment, and allows families to securely share information with selected caregivers, whether they are family, friends, or professionals. It also includes a wellness journal to help caregivers monitor their own well-being and prevent burnout. Accessible across devices, the app provides flexible, secure, and user-friendly tools to help families coordinate care, maintain empathy, and foster connection. **Anyone interested in learning more is encouraged to reach out to Crystal directly [crystal@innerhive.com](mailto:crystal@innerhive.com)**

## 8. Adjourn Meeting

Barbara announced that the next meeting will be on November 19<sup>th</sup>, moved up from the 26<sup>th</sup> due to the Thanksgiving holiday, and will take place at the Buellton Recreation Center (301 2<sup>nd</sup> Street). The focus will be on housing.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Drake*