

ICRN Quarterly Meeting Agenda and Minutes – January 28, 2026

Location: Teams Meeting **Time:** 1 to 2 pm

Attendees: Raj S., Chrishun B., Watkins K., Tarisha W., Darby M., Elizabeth S., Ananya C. Debbie K., David O., Jeffery B., Samaria

1. DEMENTIA FRIENDLY ILLINOIS

Susan F. (RUSH)

50– Total Communities

Since October meeting, 2 communities were recognized:

- Champaign/Urbana (December)
- Lincoln Park – Chicago (December)
- Several communities in different stages of the application process and/or have expressed interest:
 - Sterling
 - Ottawa
 - Pilsen
 - Boone and DeKalb County
 - North Riverside (Chicago)
 - Antioch
 - Herrin

Dementia Friendly Meeting Recap (Susan and Darby)

The Dementia Friendly meeting, held on Wednesday, January 21, had good attendance. The group revisited the topic of more flexible meeting day/time.

2. DEMENTIA FRIENDS ILLINOIS

Susan F. (RUSH)

14,826– Total Dementia Friends (14,543 as of last meeting)

11,489 – from in-person talks (11,333 as of last meeting)

3,337 – from online sign-ups (3, 210 as of last meeting)

407– People who have attended Dementia Champions training and said they would like to be a Champion (396 as of last meeting)

Monthly breakdown of numbers

In-person Dementia Friends talks

October – 102

November – 43

December – 11

Online Sign-ups for 2025

October – December - 126

July – September – 117

April – June – 226

January – March - 52

Champions

October – 1

November - 8

December – 2

National Office moving to new Dementia Friends reporting system which will hopefully give us access to online numbers more quickly.

3. ILLINOIS HRSA GWEP/ADRD - SHARE

4. MULTI-STATE PLAN ON AGING

Elizabeth S. (IDPH)

Year 2 of 5 of BOLD projects concluded September 2025. IDPH's continuation grant for Year 3 was awarded, and projects are continuing through 9/29/26.

A Program Coordinator was hired and began working in the Dementia Program December 2025 and IDPH continues to contract Program Evaluation responsibilities.

There are 3 projects that have been and continue to provide work to support BOLD:

1. Illinois Brain Health Project: creating and maintaining a public facing website to educate the public on risk reduction for Alzheimer's and Dementia. This website covers a variety of topics that are known to put individuals at a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's or Dementia.
2. Medical Provider & Health Systems Interactive: providing professional development to medical providers to address gaps in early detection and management of Alzheimer's and Dementia for individuals and their caregivers.
3. Professional Training Series: Provides education to professionals who may interact with individuals with Alzheimer's or Dementia. These professionals may encounter individuals with cognitive decline in their professional interactions and are taught skills that increase their dementia capability.

All projects focus on improving health equity for underserved populations as a priority.

David O. (Alz. Assoc.)

The Alzheimer's Association continues to advocate for Bold Grant funding on a federal level. The news has been positive with bi-partisan congressional support for funding.

[Alzheimer's Association Email News Release](#) (Weds, January 21, 2026):

Congress has announced a bipartisan agreement to provide a \$100 million increase for Alzheimer's and dementia research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), along with \$41.5 million for implementation of the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in fiscal year 2026. This agreement includes a historic investment in BOLD funding — the highest annual amount since the law was enacted — reinforcing the federal government's continued commitment to

addressing one of the nation's most urgent public health challenges. When signed into law, it will bring total annual federal dementia research funding to \$3.9 billion — accelerating progress against dementia for all communities nationwide.

Raj. S. (Rush)

Dr. Shah shared his screen during the meeting to discuss the Illinois Department on Aging's newly released Multisector Plan for Aging, EngAging Illinois. The goal of the plan was to formulate multiple state agencies under the purview of the governor, to work together to streamline initiatives to improve the lives of the aging population (Age Equity) in Illinois. The group started working on the plan last year. They submitted a final report of their broad plan (10-year span) and recommendations to the governor's office in December 2025. It was released to the public in January, 2026. The plan can be found on the Illinois Department on Aging website. [\(also attached\)](#) and [ICRN Blog link](#)

The four pillars:

1. Create livable and connected communities.
2. Improving affordability of aging in place.
3. Improving caregiver experience and resources.
4. Better health throughout a lifetime.

*There are 100 Age Friendly communities throughout Illinois. Efforts are underway to make Illinois an Age Friendly State.

5. ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ADAC) UPDATE

Elizabeth S. (IDPH)

- Currently working on the spring meeting and subcommittee meeting schedules.
- Subcommittee's primary task will be to work on goals, objectives and activities supporting the State Plan that was approved by IDPH, Fall 2025. Posted on their website.
- [State of Illinois Alzheimer's Disease Plan](#)

6. Alzheimer's Association

David O.

- New legislative session has reconvened with two pieces of legislation: [\(See email attachments to read more\)](#)
 - Biomarker Legislation – Senate Bill 2886 (Supported by Senator Bill Cunningham and Representative Maurice West)
 - Dementia Training for Home and Community Based Providers – Senate Bill 2971 (Supported by Senator Cristina Castro and Representative Lisa Davis)

7. Other News/Updates:

Debbie K. (Smith/SIU)

(Attachments in email)

Dementia Caregiving 101 – I am attaching an invite but will be amending it because we had to reschedule this week's session.

Brain Aging Conference – October 29, 2026

Sing by Heart Dementia Choir

Dementia Friends Community Event - date not determined for 2026

Memory and Aging ECHO for professionals

Raj S. (Rush)

- Reviewed National Alliance for Caregiving 2025 Caregiving in the US Report (See attachment in email)
- Reviewed National Alliance for Caregiving 2025 Illinois Report (See attachment in email)
- Discussed LA Care Podcast ([ICRN blog Post](#))

General Information:

Email Chrishun_m_brown@rush.edu if you have announcements to include in email updates to the ICRN listserv.

Next Meeting Wednesday, April 22, 2026