

Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS)

Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, June 18, 2025

TIME: 10-11:30am

PLACE: 1650 Mission St. 5th Floor, Golden Gate Room

To protect the health of the Advisory Council members, DAS staff, and members of the public during the COVID-19 health emergency, the DAS Advisory Council will continue to hold meetings remotely. Members of the public are encouraged to also participate in the meetings remotely.

Members Present: Allen Cooper, Margaret Graf, Chris Dillon, Beverly Karnatz, Tia Small, Diane Lawrence, Juliet Rothman, Daisy Jimenez, Ivy Chang, Lisa Cook, Marcy Adelman, Morningstar Vancil.

Members Absent Excused: Darlene Ramlose, Harry Breaux.

Welcome: Call to order 10:00 am and welcome all Council Members and guests.

Roll Call/Secretary

Motion to approve the May 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes: Approved.

Public Comment: None.

Director's Report, presented by Executive Director Kelly Dearman:

Federal Budget

- A proposed reorganization of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which would have shifted responsibilities to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), has been withdrawn.
- The federal budget includes significant funding cuts, notably:
 - Elimination of support for chronic disease programs
 - Reductions in grant funding for falls prevention and Alzheimer's-related initiatives

State Budget

- A new bill has been passed to ensure continuity of services for older adults and people with disabilities during disasters.

- The state is facing a \$12 billion budget deficit. In May, Governor Newsom proposed deep cuts.
- Due to legislative pushback, several modifications have since been made:
 - The Medi-Cal asset limit will be raised above the Governor's original proposal
 - The elimination of dental benefits for undocumented immigrants has been delayed until July 2027
 - The new Medi-Cal premium for certain populations has been lowered to \$30/month (down from \$100/month)
- The budget remains unfinalized and in flux, with negotiations ongoing.

San Francisco Budget

- The Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAS) lost 11 vacant positions, meaning no staff layoffs occurred.
- Cuts to grants were handled through a thoughtful process, focusing on:
 - Core services
 - Target populations
 - Service gaps
 - Strategic priorities
 - Fiscal performance
- The local budget process remains in progress, with final approval expected in July and implementation starting in August.

Program and Facility Updates

- The Kelsey Civic Center is set to open in July, with events planned to celebrate its launch.
- Disability awareness training has been successful, with 54% of DAS employees completing the program.
 - Members of the Advisory Council will be invited to participate.

President's Report by President Dr. Allen Cooper:

The TACC meeting was held on June 12. TACC provides two reports each quarter, with this year's focus on housing.

Orange County shared that it does not have any county-run hospitals. Instead, healthcare services are provided through a nonprofit organization called CalOptima Health, which manages the county's health system by contracting with Medicare Advantage plans. CalOptima oversees services including assisted living facilities (ALFs), respite care, street medicine, PACE programs, and 193 units of supportive housing.

Stanislaus County also presented a report. The largest city in the county is Modesto. Their local organization, the Senior Advocacy Network, delivers a wide range of services for older adults. These include legal services, housing support, services within homeless shelters, care

management, and financial assistance for housing and shared housing programs. Notably, 50 percent of individuals in Stanislaus County shelters are seniors, compared to 15–20 percent in San Francisco.

New Business:

A. Report on Conservatorships – Jill Nielson LCSW Deputy Director of Programs

Division Overview

Public Administrator: Investigates and administers the estates of deceased individuals.

Public Conservator: Oversees LPS (mental health) conservatorships.

Public Guardian: Manages probate conservatorships.

Representative Payee Program: Administers Social Security and VA benefits for about 1,000 individuals, helping with bill payment and housing stability to prevent conservatorships.

San Francisco Public Guardian

San Francisco has two distinct conservatorship programs: LPS (mental health) and probate. Probate conservatorships are generally for people with cognitive decline, dementia, or brain injury. The Public Guardian makes medical and financial decisions and uses client assets to support them.

Court requires proof that:

- No family or friend is better suited or willing to serve
- All voluntary options have been exhausted
- Legal planning is insufficient

Probate conservatorships fall into two categories:

- Person: Medical decision-making and placement (often in-home if assets allow)
- Estate: Managing property and financial matters

There are about 220 individuals under probate conservatorship in SF, which usually lasts for life. If a "family of choice" wants to serve, the office encourages them to petition the court. A private conservator is another option for those with sufficient assets. OnLok may help people avoid conservatorship by offering coordinated services in one location.

LPS Conservatorship (Mental Health)

Established under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (1967), LPS conservatorships provide due process and mental health care outside institutions. Grave disability is the legal basis. San

Francisco's LPS program is large—serving about 750 individuals—and places clients in locked settings, RCFEs, or supportive housing statewide.

As of January 2026, the definition of “gravely disability” will expand to include inability to access medical care or safety due to mental illness or severe substance use disorder.

The program has 15 Master’s-level LCSWs who serve as deputy conservators. They monitor psychiatric care, prepare court reports, and recommend placement based on need and safety. They coordinate with the Department of Public Health to place clients in available facilities—sometimes as far as San Diego due to limited local beds.

Conservators meet with clients monthly. LPS conservatorships typically last one year, with the goal of stabilizing clients and transitioning them to more independent care.

Pathway from Hospital to LPS Conservatorship

- Begins with a 72-hour psychiatric hold (5150)
- If not stabilized, can extend to 14 days, then up to two 30-day extensions
- Legal advocacy is provided by a public defender
- If a conservatorship referral is received from a doctor or psychiatrist, the Public Conservator has five days to review and may request temporary conservatorship
- A full assessment is then conducted to ensure the least restrictive intervention

Challenges

- Existing laws authorize conservatorship but lack funding, implementation guidance, and adequate placement resources
- Probate conservatorship timelines are slow—court calendars are backed up (90+ days)
- No dedicated state funding for Public Guardian or Public Conservator services
- Limited access to placement beds for conservatorship clients

Recommendations

- Create a state-level home for technical assistance and support
- Engage the Commission on Aging in conservatorship oversight
- Increase availability of licensed care beds
- Launch a research agenda to assess effectiveness of LPS conservatorships and identify best practices

B. Plan for Site Visits – Allen, Juliette Rothman, Michael Zaugg

Mike Zaugg noted that documentation from 1997 stated all service providers should be visited annually.

Alan reported a strong initial response to the call for participation. He generously brought croissants for those who signed up for visits, though everyone was welcome to enjoy one.

Juliet shared that she received responses from nine Councilmembers. She recommends that each member commit to visiting two sites per year—one visit to take place in June and another in January.

Morningstar expressed her interest in selecting sites that are inclusive and non-discriminatory, noting that her identity as a queer individual has sometimes led to negative experiences. She wants to ensure that the sites she visits are welcoming to all.

Lisa requested to be accompanied during her visits, and Alan volunteered to join her. Alan also suggested that site visit forms include a question or observation section about how facilities accommodate people with disabilities. Lisa offered to help identify and highlight accessibility concerns during visits.

Old Business: None.

Reports from the Field:

- A. TACC Report – See President’s Report
- B. LGBTQ Updates – Dr. Marcy Adelman
A webinar was given on Monday on the survey first release of focus group information, new data points will be provided next week.
- C. Joint Legislative Process review – Diane Lawrence
Will report next month.
- D. CSL Priorities & Updates – None.

Announcements/Reminders

Margaret’s second book was just published, Senior Sharp, Essays and Art of Aging.

Adjournment: 11:29 am

Next Meeting: Wednesday July 23, 2025