

# ASTDD Healthy Aging Committee Annual Report

## Jan 1, 2023 – Dec 31, 2023

**Chair:** Sam Zwetchkenbaum

**Facilitator:** Lori Kepler Cofano

**Members:** Pam Blankenship, Steffany Chamut, Pam Cushenan, Conan Davis, Guy Deyton, Sarah Dirks, Russ Dunkel, Elisa Ghezzi, Susan Griffin, Lauren Gritzer, Mike Helgeson, Koua Her, Christie Hogue, Deb Jacobi, Judith Jones, Prasida Khanal, Kally Kline, Sarah Kowalski, Karen Lewis, Sowmya Natarajan, Carol Nguyen, Karen Phillips, Rachel Sizemore, Lyubov Slashcheva, Gwen Sullentrup, Maryam Tabrizi, Karen Tracy, Janet Yellowitz

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**New members:** Lauren Gritzer, Koua Her, Sarah Kowalski, Sowmya Natarajan, Carol Nguyen, Rachel Sizemore, Lyubov Slashcheva

**Subcommittee members:**

Improving the Oral Health of Older Adults Best Practice Approach Report (BPAR)  
Advisory Workgroup: Russell Dunkel, Deb Jacobi, Sam Zwetchkenbaum.

**Purpose:**

The Healthy Aging Committee (HAC) is a focal point for healthy aging issues, including chronic diseases, and resources for state and territorial oral health programs. The HAC consists of subject matter experts in healthy aging and oral health as well as state oral health program directors/program managers and staff interested in advancing statewide efforts to improve the oral health of the older adult population. The HAC was supported through December 2023 by a grant from the Gary and Mary West Foundation (GMWF). The funding supported the development of the [Improving the Oral Health of Older Adults BPAR](#) and disseminated to state oral health programs, in the ASTDD Weekly Digest, and various social media outlets and other entities with an interest in older adults and the relationship of oral health to overall health. This was a one-year grant.

The HAC supports the ASTDD Strategic Plan by encouraging the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed policies and practices, identifying emerging issues and promising approaches, providing tools and technical assistance to improve policies, plans, programs and partnerships, promoting and facilitating internal and external collaborations, promoting the collection of data, such as the older adult ASTDD Basic Screening Survey (BSS) to inform planning and decision making.

**Accomplishments and Current Activities:**

- The Healthy Aging Committee (HAC) held meetings in January, March, May, July, September and November as well as a face-to-face gathering at the 2023 NOHC.
- The HAC collaborated with the ASTDD Best Practices Committee on the development of the Improving the Oral Health of Older Adults BPAR that was posted in December 2023 and disseminated widely.
- The HAC website was reviewed and updated.

- In April, Lori presented a roundtable at the National Oral Health Conference (NOHC) on the [Older Adult Oral Health Resources for Collaboration](#) document. A QR code was provided to participants to simplify access to the document.
- In May, the Older Adult Oral Health Resources for Collaboration was sent to various partners for dissemination during Older Americans Month.
- Sam presented on the Older Adult Oral Health Resources for Collaboration to the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Oral Health Interest Group in May.
- Lori attended quarterly Medicare Action Learning Collaborative meetings held by the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN).
- In June, Lori, Chris Wood, Mike Helgeson, Deb Jacobi and Mary Larkin had a call with Ayrielle Franco, the new project officer at the Gary and Mary West Foundation, to provide a status update on the BPAR and to discuss the potential to apply for funding for 2024.
- In July, Dr. Judith Jones presented to the HAC on updates to Medicare and potential changes related to oral health.
- In September, Matt Jacob provided messages to be shared via social media outlets and with partners for Healthy Aging Month.
- In October, the grant application was submitted to the Gary and Mary West Foundation (GMWF) for 2024. The funding will allow for an update to the Improving Oral Health Access and Services for Older Adults white paper. This project will be a collaboration between ASTDD's HAC and Dental Public Health Policy Committees and Apple Tree Dental.
- In December, ASTDD received confirmation of funding for 2024 from the GMWF. Work has begun on finding a primary author for the project. A small advisory workgroup will be formed to assist with the update to the Improving Oral Health Access and Services for Older Adults. This will be the primary focus for the HAC in 2024.
- The HAC 2023-2024 workplan and logic model were updated, approved and posted.
- Members who had not attended a meeting in over a year were removed from the HAC roster.

**Future Activities:**

- Lori submitted a grant request to the Gary and Mary West Foundation to support the update to the [Improving Oral Health Access and Services for Older Adults](#) white paper. The grant was approved, and funding runs from January through December 2024.

**Subcommittee Work:**

- A small advisory workgroup, separate from the ASTDD HAC, will be involved on the update to the Improving Oral Health Access and Services for Older Adults white paper. A strategic planning session to discuss the project is scheduled for January 2024.

**Committee Needs:**

Funding will be on a year-to-year basis depending on grant opportunities.