

50<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY

**50 YEARS OF INCLUSION:**

**HONORING | CELEBRATING**  
**THE PAST | THE FUTURE**

**1976 ..... ▶ 2026**

**Annual Convention • August 18-21, 2026**  
**Omni Corpus Christi Hotel • Corpus Christi, TX**

 **aaidd**  
*Knowledge | Support | Empowerment*  
**Texas Chapter**

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# WELCOME

## Welcome to the 50th Anniversary AAIDD Texas Chapter Convention!

### 50 Years of Inclusion: Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future

This year, we celebrate an extraordinary milestone in the history of the AAIDD Texas Chapter. For half a century, our community of professionals, advocates, families, researchers, and self advocates has worked together to advance inclusion, opportunity, and quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Texas. Reaching this 50 year mark is a testament to the dedication, compassion, and vision of people like you.

As part of this special anniversary, we invite you to explore the commemorative displays throughout the convention. These exhibits highlight the remarkable progress made in the IDD community over the past five decades from groundbreaking policy changes to innovative supports, from expanding rights to strengthening person centered practices. They honor the leaders who paved the way and the collective efforts that continue to shape a more inclusive future.

To celebrate this milestone year, we're also hosting a **silent auction** and a special **50/50 drawing** in recognition of our 50th anniversary. Your participation adds excitement to the festivities and directly supports the ongoing mission and future initiatives of the AAIDD Texas Chapter.

During the convention, you'll connect with colleagues, learn from inspiring speakers, and engage with ideas that will guide the next 50 years of progress. Whether you come to share your expertise, discover new approaches, or build meaningful partnerships, your presence strengthens our community and our shared commitment to inclusion.

Thank you for joining us for this historic celebration.

**Welcome and here's to the next 50 years!**

*Susanne Deiter*  
President-Elect and Convention Committee Chair  
AAIDD Texas Chapter

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## OPENING SESSION

**Wednesday, August 19 – 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

### **Analyzing the Past, Planning for the Future**

The presentation is designed to present learners with policy analysis of the history of publicly funded supports and projections on the future of such supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The evidence on funding trends will be reviewed along with published plans for the future of Medicaid funding. A proposed model for leveraging collectivism will be described, illustrated by real-world examples and practical strategies, to promote community and inclusion when paid supports are in short supply.

- Margaret A. Nygren, EdD, FAAIDD, Executive Director and CEO of AAIDD

## AAIDD TEXAS CHAPTER AWARDS LUNCHEON

**Thursday, August 20, 11:15 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Annual Awards Presentations

## GENERAL SESSIONS

**Thursday, August 20 – 1:15 – 2:15 p.m.**

### **Texas Legislative Recap and Plans for the Future**

In this discussion, we will examine the ramifications of legislation enacted during the previous legislative session and their specific implications for IDD services and supports in Texas. Additionally, we will identify the necessary action steps that must be taken prior to the commencement of the upcoming session. It is crucial to recognize that significant progress and impact are often achieved between legislative sessions. It is imperative that these steps are initiated promptly.

- Dion White, MBA, FAAIDD, CEO, Center for Life Resources
- Laramie Stroud, Chief of Staff for Drew Darby, State Representative/District 72, Texas House of Representatives

**Thursday, August 20 – 3 – 4:30 p.m.**

### **Past Prologue: What History Demands of Us**

The system of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) reflects decades of advocacy, policy, and financing decisions. While progress has expanded community-based care, significant challenges remain in access, workforce capacity, and misalignment of policy and practice. This session uses history as a call to action, outlining what is now required of system leaders, policymakers, providers, advocates, and other stakeholders. It will identify priorities including workforce stabilization, funding alignment with acuity and outcomes, stronger oversight, and reduced interest list backlogs. This is not a moment for celebration, but for discipline and alignment to sustain momentum and fulfill the system's promise to individuals with IDD and their families

- Danette Castle, MPA, M.Ed., Senior Advisor, Texas Council of Community Centers

## CLOSING SESSION

**Friday, August 21, 9 – 11 a.m.**

**State Leader Panel Discussion**

**Continental Breakfast will be provided**

- Moderator, Ken Winston, President, AAIDD Texas Chapter
- Sandy Frizzell Batton, Executive Director, Provider Alliance for Community Services of Texas (PACSTX)
- Scott Daigle, Public Policy Director, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)
- Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Arc of Texas
- Erin Lawler, J.D., M.S., Chief of System Policy, Texas Council of Community Centers
- Anne McGonigle, Deputy Associate Commissioner of IDD Services and PASRR, Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Carole Smith, Executive Director, Private Providers Association of Texas (PPAT)

# SPONSORS & EXHIBITORS

## SPONSORS

### DIAMOND



### PLATINUM



### GOLD



### BRONZE



## TABLETOP DISPLAY EXHIBITORS

Better Lives

Molina Healthcare of Texas

Pharmacy Alternatives by PharMerica

SK Life Science

Starting Point Nursing Services

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts – Texas ABLE

TWC VR Rehabilitation Council of Texas

# SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE

## Tuesday August 18

**3 – 5 p.m.**  
Registration

**3 – 5 p.m.**  
Exhibit Hall/Silent Auction Set-up

**4:45 – 6 p.m.**  
Reception/Poster Presentations

**6 p.m.**  
AAIDD Texas Chapter Board of Directors and  
Convention Committee Meeting/Dinner

## Wednesday August 19

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**  
Registration

**7:30 – 8:30 a.m.**  
Continental Breakfast

**8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**  
Opening Session

**10:45 – 11:45 a.m.**  
Breakout Sessions

**Noon – 4:30 p.m.**  
Exhibit Hall/Silent Auction (Lunch on your own)

**1:30 – 2:30 p.m.**  
Breakout Sessions

**2:30 – 3 p.m.**  
Break (Exhibit Hall)

**3 – 4 p.m.**  
Breakout Sessions

**4 – 4:30 p.m.**  
AAIDD Texas Chapter Annual Business Meeting

**5 – 6:30 p.m.**  
Reception

## Thursday August 20

**7:45 a.m. – 5 p.m.**  
Registration

**7:45 – 8:15 a.m.**  
Continental Breakfast (Exhibit Hall)

**7:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
Silent Auction Open

**7:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.**  
Exhibit Hall Open

**8:30 – 9:30 a.m.**  
Breakout Sessions

**9:30 – 10 a.m.**  
Break (Exhibit Hall)

**10 – 11 a.m.**  
Breakout Sessions

**11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
Awards Luncheon

**1 p.m.**  
Silent Auction Closes

**1:15 – 2:15 p.m.**  
General Session

**2:15 – 2:45 p.m.**  
Break (Exhibit Hall)

**3 – 4:30 p.m.**  
General Session

**4:30– 5 p.m.**  
Silent Auction Pick-up

**Evening on your own**

## Friday August 21

**8 – 11 a.m.**  
Registration

**8 – 8:45 a.m.**  
Continental Breakfast

**9 – 11 a.m.**  
Closing Session Panel Discussion



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Tuesday August 18

3 – 5 p.m.  
REGISTRATION

3 – 5 p.m.  
EXHIBIT HALL/SILENT AUCTION SET-UP

4:45 – 6 p.m.  
RECEPTION

### Poster Presentations

#### Factors Influencing Weight Change in Special Olympics Athletes

The chance of obesity is greater among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) compared to the general population. To address this, an 8-week lifestyle intervention was implemented in collaboration with Special Olympics. Efficacy was demonstrated through a significant reduction in body mass index (BMI; kg/m<sup>2</sup>) in participants in overweight and obese BMI categories. The purpose of the present study was to examine demographic variables (age, gender, and living situation) impacting weight change. No significant differences were observed between groups; however, those living alone or with family trended towards significant weight loss compared to those living in group or foster homes.

- *Jessica Kirschmann, MS, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Houston*
- *Nabiha Khan, Undergraduate Student, University of Houston*
- *Eman Loya, Undergraduate Student, University of Houston*
- *Craig Johnston, Ph.D., Professor and Department Chair, University of Houston*

#### Promoting Health Among Latino Families with Developmental Disabilities

Latino families of children with developmental disabilities face elevated health risks due to structural and cultural barriers, with caregivers experiencing similar vulnerabilities. This mixed-methods randomized controlled trial evaluated the effectiveness of PODER Familiar, a culturally tailored health education program, among Latino families in Texas and Illinois. Fifty-five caregiver-child dyads were randomized to intervention or control groups. Intervention participants completed 10 virtual sessions with trained peer mentors. Results showed significant improvements in caregivers' health-promoting behaviors, diet, stress, and home physical activity environment, as well as improvements in children's sleep. High fidelity and strong satisfaction highlight the program's promise for culturally grounded, family-centered health promotion.

- *Amy Pei-Lung Yu, Ph.D., MSW, Postdoctoral Fellow, The University of Texas at Austin*

6 p.m.

AAIDD TEXAS CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE MEETING/DINNER

## Wednesday August 19

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
REGISTRATION

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.  
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.  
OPENING SESSION

### Analyzing the Past, Planning for the Future

- *Margaret A. Nygren, EdD, FAAIDD, Executive Director and CEO of AAIDD*

The presentation is designed to present learners with policy analysis of the history of publicly funded supports and projections on the future of such supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The evidence on funding trends will be reviewed along with published plans for the future of Medicaid funding. A proposed model for leveraging collectivism will be described, illustrated by real-world examples and practical strategies, to promote community and inclusion when paid supports are in short supply.

The Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Texas Chapter has applied for a consumer stipend grant from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. The purpose of the grant is to enable individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their family members, who are without organizational support, to attend the 2026 AAIDD Texas Chapter Annual Convention. By promoting inclusion, AAIDD Texas Chapter can extend to stipend recipients the benefits that are available to all persons who will attend the convention.

# Wednesday August 19

10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### 1. Important Drug Interactions: What Are We To Do?

This presentation explores the pharmacological challenge faced by caregivers working with individuals in IDD who may have life-long conditions that expose them to high numbers of medications to treat various conditions. Many individuals take upwards of fifteen medications daily and psychotropic medications are frequently combined. Medical comorbidities require additional drugs, and each additional medication increases the drug interaction risk. Several types of interactions exist, and all are explored for better understanding by staff. High risk medications are noted and how interactions may play out in the individual with perhaps limited communication skills are denoted. Assessment challenges, and behavioral indicators of drug problems are discussed as well as appropriate nursing and laboratory monitoring. Ameliorating or eliminating drug interaction strategies are presented along with an explanation of the role of the staff as advocates for these individuals.

- *Nanette R. Wrobel, BS, RPh, Director of Education, Tarrytown Expocare Pharmacy*

### 2. From Research to Revolution: Co-Creating the Future of Disability – Inclusive Workplaces

This interactive session explores how leadership and workplace practices affect employment experiences for people with disabilities. Self-advocates, family members, and professionals are invited to share perspectives about what helps people succeed at work and what barriers still exist. Together, we will discuss how communication, leadership and workplace culture influence belonging, opportunity, and long-term success. Participants will also have the opportunity to contribute insights that help guide ongoing doctoral research focused on improving leadership and workplace systems, so employment works better for people with disabilities and for everyone.

- *Jamie L. Moyer, MSOL, CAS, BCP, Chief Program & Development Officer, Bloom Consulting*

### 3. The Hidden Trauma of IDD Families in Crisis

Families supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities often experience repeated crisis events, system barriers, and chronic stress that remain largely invisible within service models. Drawing on Enhanced Community Coordination and crisis intervention experience, this presentation explores the psychological impact on caregivers, including secondary trauma, burnout, and decision fatigue. Participants will learn how system practices can unintentionally increase family distress and how service coordinators, clinicians, and providers can implement trauma-informed strategies to better support families. Practical tools for communication, crisis planning, and collaboration will be shared to improve outcomes for people with IDD and their support networks.

- *Kayla Gamez, M.S., Continuity of Services, Crisis Intervention and Enhanced Community Coordination, LIDDA Manager, Lakes Regional Community Center*

Noon – 4:30 p.m.

## EXHIBIT HALL/SILENT AUCTION OPEN

(Lunch on your own)

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### 1. Spreading Wings: Skills for Teens with Different Minds

This presentation explores practical, neuroscience-informed strategies that educators, mental health professionals, and parents can use to support teens with autism and learning differences as they transition into adulthood. Drawing from both professional expertise and personal experience, Dr. Winston will share approaches that strengthen executive functioning, emotional awareness, social communication, and independent living skills. Topics will include tools for improving organization, memory, and time management through visual supports and structured routines, as well as strategies that help young people recognize and manage emotions by focusing on what is within their control. The session will also address conversation skills, friendship-building, workplace communication, and the development of meaningful social connections that support long-term success in both career and personal life. In addition, Dr. Winston will discuss ways to foster responsibility, accountability, and self-advocacy in young adults. Her insights are informed by more than a decade of supporting individuals with autism and learning differences in achieving their college, career, and life goals, combined with her own lifelong experience navigating a learning difference.

- *Priya Winston, Ph.D., LMSW, Director of Curriculum and Clinical Excellence, Transitions, The Arc of Lexington*

# Wednesday August 19

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS - CONTINUED

### 2. From Reactive to Proactive Care in IDD

People who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are living longer and experiencing increasingly complex medical conditions. Advances in healthcare have resulted in shorter hospital stays, shifting increasingly complex care into community-based settings. As a result, Qualified Intellectual Disability Professionals (QIDP) are now supporting individuals who have higher acuity needs than ever before. This session will provide practical, system-based approaches to promoting health and wellness in this population. Attendees will learn actionable strategies to reduce avoidable hospitalizations, strengthen interdisciplinary coordination and implement sustainable wellness initiatives in group homes and agency settings.

- Elizabeth Vinsant, RN, BSN, CDDN, Director of Nursing IDD Pharmacy Consultant, Pharmacy Alternatives/PharMerica
- Terri Cannedy, RN, BSN, Director of Nursing IDD Pharmacy Consultant, Pharmacy Alternatives/PharMerica

### 3. Mental Health Wellness for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The hurdles in assuring mental health wellness for the IDD population are many, from providing accurate diagnoses and treatment modalities to establishing a healthy environment to promote wellness. During this session we will explore the propensity toward diagnostic overshadowing, when clinicians attribute psychiatric symptoms (such as anxiety, depression, or aggression) solely to the person's intellectual disability or autism, rather than recognizing a co-occurring mental health condition. We will look at atypical presentations, such as self-injury, property destruction, or withdrawal that might signal a mental health disorder. We will discuss and review the need for trauma-informed care, and the efficacy of evidence-based practices that can be adapted to address cognitive and communication challenges, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), and Alternative Communication methods that can give otherwise non-verbal individuals a voice. And finally, we will explore the need for a healthy support system, including collaborative, wrap-around care, and identifying and addressing signs of caregiver stress and burnout.

- Dr. John Kyle, LPC, BCBA, Counselor Managing Partner, Fearless 365

2:30 – 3 p.m.

## BREAK (EXHIBIT HALL)

3 – 4 p.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### 1. Cultivating Independence Through Outdoor and Homesteading Experiences

This presentation explores how inclusive outdoor and homesteading experiences can support character development, independence and community belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Drawing on programs at Down Home Ranch, the session highlights how activities such as gardening, animal care, cooking, and food preservation build practical life skills while fostering confidence and connection with the land. Participants will learn how nature-based and homesteading experiences naturally cultivate kindness, generosity, responsibility and teamwork. Attendees will leave with ideas for creating accessible programs that strengthen both individual growth and community life.

- Barry Hamilton, LCSW, Executive Director, Down Home Ranch

### 2. From Sleep Problems to Sweet Dreams

Sleep problems are pervasive among individuals with intellectual disabilities, yet many families struggle to find effective, compassionate solutions. This presentation will introduce an evidence-based framework integrating sleep science and applied behavior analysis to address sleep challenges without relying solely on extinction-based methods. Participants will learn practical strategies for determining sleep needs, building effective routines, creating optimal sleep environments, identifying skills that can be taught and practiced during waking hours, and selecting interventions to support independent sleep. Through brief case examples, attendees will gain actionable tools to support better sleep outcomes for children and adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

- Holly Dillen, LBA, BCBA, CBSP, Senior Manager, Texana Center

# Wednesday August 19

3 – 4 p.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS - CONTINUED

### 3. Peer Support Specialist Role on Transition Support Team

Misunderstanding the role of peer support specialists within systems-level teams can lead to scope confusion and inappropriate expectations. This session focuses specifically on the peer support specialist's role on a transition support team (TST). Participants will examine how the position operates as indirect, non-direct support. The presentation outlines the role's three core functions—education, technical assistance, and multidisciplinary consultation—and differentiates these from traditional direct service delivery within mental health and substance use programs.

- *Jordan Smelley, MHPS, IDD Peer Support Specialist for Transition Support Team, Integral Care*

4 – 4:30 p.m.

## AAIDD TEXAS CHAPTER ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

5 – 6:30 p.m.

## RECEPTION

# Thursday August 20

7:45 a.m. – 5 p.m.

## REGISTRATION

7:45 – 8:15 a.m.

## CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST – EXHIBIT HALL

7:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## SILENT AUCTION OPEN

7:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

## EXHIBIT HALL OPEN

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### 1. From Checklists to Conversations: Refreshing Person-Centered Thinking Skills – Part 1

This session helps IDD case managers strengthen everyday practice without adding new tasks or requirements. By refreshing core Person Centered Thinking skills, participants learn how to have more meaningful, efficient conversations, improve engagement with members and families, and gather higher quality information for service planning. The session reinforces how person centered practice naturally supports HCBS and CMS expectations while reducing reliance on checklists. Case managers will also reconnect with the purpose behind their work, supporting professional confidence, clarity, and resilience in a demanding role.

- *Rachel Hopkins, Person-Centered Thinking Mentor-Trainer, Director, Healthcare Services, Molina Healthcare of Texas*

### 2. Music Therapy's Role in Mental Health

As time passes, the horizon of **medical** diagnoses continues to expand. Over the past 50 years, more than 40 new pathogens have been identified, each of which has challenged our well-being and survival. Such pathogens have brought us illnesses like AIDS, COVID-19, SARS, Polio, Marburg, Ebola and others. What has followed is progress in medical laboratory research and pharmaceutical treatment. In the future, this process in the medical field will likely continue on course. In **mental health**, though, the last 50 years have mainly seen a significant shift in diagnostic framework. Rather than new illnesses emerging, researchers have seen the development of improved detection, evolving societal definitions with mental health issues. Along with the development of detection and identification, more avenues of treatment have developed. In this presentation, we will look at a treatment method that started gaining credibility in the 1950s: music therapy. We will look at the ways by which music (and thus) music therapy keeps our lives balanced and how it is used to help people who struggle with mental health to maintain some order and balance in their lives.

- *Lauri Gallegos, Board Certified Music Therapist, Lauri-gallegos.com*

# Thursday August 20

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS - CONTINUED

### 3. Building Independence for People with Autism

Promoting independence for people with autism is a priority for families, educators, and service providers. Yet many individuals develop an overreliance on prompts or staff assistance that can prevent skills from transferring beyond structured teaching situations. This session examines behavior-analytic strategies that promote independent performance by transferring stimulus control to natural cues as prompts are systematically faded. Participants will review task analysis, systematic prompting and prompt fading, reinforcement, self-management, visual supports, and video-based instruction. Examples from school, home, and community settings will illustrate how these strategies support daily living skills, social participation, and greater autonomy.

- *Chad Burns, BCBA, LBA, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, ABA San Marcos, LLC*

9:30 – 10 a.m.

## BREAK (EXHIBIT HALL)

10 – 11 a.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### 1. From Checklists to Conversations: Refreshing Person-Centered Thinking Skills – Part 2

This session helps IDD case managers strengthen everyday practice without adding new tasks or requirements. By refreshing core Person Centered Thinking skills, participants learn how to have more meaningful, efficient conversations, improve engagement with members and families, and gather higher quality information for service planning. The session reinforces how person centered practice naturally supports HCBS and CMS expectations while reducing reliance on checklists. Case managers will also reconnect with the purpose behind their work, supporting professional confidence, clarity, and resilience in a demanding role.

- *Rachel Hopkins, Person-Centered Thinking Mentor-Trainer, Director, Healthcare Services, Molina Healthcare of Texas*

### 2. My Faith My Way

People with intellectual disabilities have diverse spiritual needs that deserve respect and support. This session explores person-centered strategies for identifying what spirituality means to each individual, including how to ask meaningful questions and honor personal choice. Participants will learn practical ways to build inclusive community connections, coordinate transportation, and use flexibility in scheduling and staffing to remove barriers to participation. Designed for individuals, families, direct support staff, and professionals, this presentation offers actionable tools to promote spiritual self-determination, belonging, and meaningful engagement in the spiritual communities and practices individuals choose.

- *Karen Towery, State Executive Director, Evergreen Life Services*
- *Linda Bailey, Regional Vice President, Evergreen Life Services*

### 3. Stakeholder-Driven Dissemination in IDD Research

This session highlights stakeholder-driven dissemination within the NIH-funded Functional Reading Activities to Motivate and Empower (FRAME) project for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We provide a brief overview of FRAME, followed by a focus on how research findings were shared back to participants, families, and community partners using accessible, multimodal approaches. Attendees will learn how stakeholder preferences informed dissemination formats such as plain-language summaries, videos, and infographics, as well as how materials were made freely available via Open Science Framework (OSF). Implications for equitable, transparent, and sustainable research partnerships will be discussed.

- *Alison Prahj, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor/Speech-Language Pathologist, Texas Christian University*

11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## AWARDS LUNCHEON

1 p.m.

## SILENT AUCTION CLOSURES

# Thursday August 20

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

## GENERAL SESSION

### Texas Legislative Recap and Plans for the Future

- *Dion White, MBA, FAAIDD, CEO, Center for Life Resources*
- *Laramie Stroud, Chief of Staff for Drew Darby, State Representative/District 72, Texas House of Representatives*

In this discussion, we will examine the ramifications of legislation enacted during the previous legislative session and their specific implications for IDD services and supports in Texas. Additionally, we will identify the necessary action steps that must be taken prior to the commencement of the upcoming session. It is crucial to recognize that significant progress and impact are often achieved between legislative sessions. It is imperative that these steps are initiated promptly.

2:15 – 2:45 p.m.

## BREAK (EXHIBIT HALL)

3 – 4:30 p.m.

## GENERAL SESSION

### Past Prologue: What History Demands of Us

- *Danette Castle, MPA, M.Ed., Senior Advisor, Texas Council of Community Centers*

The system of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) reflects decades of advocacy, policy, and financing decisions. While progress has expanded community-based care, significant challenges remain in access, workforce capacity, and misalignment of policy and practice. This session uses history as a call to action, outlining what is now required of system leaders, policymakers, providers, advocates, and other stakeholders. It will identify priorities including workforce stabilization, funding alignment with acuity and outcomes, stronger oversight, and reduced interest list backlogs. This is not a moment for celebration, but for discipline and alignment to sustain momentum and fulfill the system's promise to individuals with IDD and their families.

4:30 – 5 p.m.

## SILENT AUCTION PICK-UP

## EVENING ON YOUR OWN

# Friday August 21

8 – 11 a.m.

## REGISTRATION

8 – 8:45 a.m.

## CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9 – 11 a.m.

## CLOSING SESSION

### State Leader Panel Discussion

- *Moderator, Ken Winston, President, AAIDD Texas Chapter*
- *Sandy Frizzell Batton, Executive Director, Provider Alliance for Community Services of Texas (PACSTX)*
- *Scott Daigle, Public Policy Director, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)*
- *Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, The Arc of Texas*
- *Erin Lawler, J.D., M.S., Chief of System Policy, Texas Council of Community Centers*
- *Anne McGonigle, Deputy Associate Commissioner of IDD Services and PASRR, Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC)*
- *Carole Smith, Executive Director, Private Providers Association of Texas (PPAT)*

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ONLINE REGISTRATION

To register online, go to [www.aaiddtx.org](http://www.aaiddtx.org). You can make your payment by credit card or check. Once you have registered online, make check payable to AAIDD Texas Chapter and mail payment to: AAIDD Texas Chapter, P.O. Box 28076, Austin, TX 78755.

## Hotel Information

Omni Corpus Christi Hotel  
900 North Shoreline Blvd.  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

Online Reservations: [Click here](#)

Group room rates available (3) nights prior and (3) post to the event based upon availability. Reservations requested after cut-off date will be subject to space and rate availability.

**Rates:** \$162.00 single/double occupancy  
Check-in time is 4 p.m.; check-out time is 11 a.m.

Make your reservation by July 27, 2026 to ensure the special rate and room availability. Reservations requested after cut-off date will be subject to space and rate availability.

**Hotel Parking:** Discounted daily self-parking is \$15 + tax (50% off) and valet daily parking is \$40 + tax.

## TRANSPORTATION

Hotel provides complimentary shuttle service to/from the Corpus Christi International Airport. Taxis and rental car agencies are located at the airport.

## ATTIRE

Attire is “business casual” for all meetings and events.

## BADGE IDENTIFICATION

Badges are required for entry to all meeting rooms, meal functions, and Exhibit Hall.

## CONCURRENT SESSION ADMITTANCE

All sessions are open to conference attendees on a *first-come/first-serve* basis. As soon as all chairs are occupied, the room monitor will close the session. Fire codes prohibit the attendees from standing in the aisles or against the walls. We appreciate your cooperation.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

CEs are available for designated sessions at the Convention at no charge. You will be given QR codes for the approved sessions. Additional information will be provided onsite.

## CONVENTION EVALUATION FORMS

Be sure to complete the overall convention evaluation form and return it to the registration desk before the closing session. Attendees who complete the overall convention evaluation form, will receive a ticket for a prize drawing to be held at the closing session. Your input is important and will help us plan for the 2027 Convention.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## DOOR PRIZES

Door Prize drawings will be held in the Exhibit Hall at selected break times on Wednesday and Thursday. To qualify, you must visit all exhibitors and have each one sign the drawing card. Drawing cards will be available at the registration desk. To be eligible to win, your completed entry form must be dropped in the bowl at the AAIDD Texas Chapter exhibit table. You must be present to win!

## EXHIBITION INFORMATION

There are (20) exhibit tables available for the show this year. The exhibit fee includes one registration. Additional company representatives will need to pay the additional exhibitor fee (\$195). Upon receipt of your exhibitor registration and payment, display tables will be assigned on a first-come/first-serve basis. The exhibit hall will be open during the following hours: Wednesday, August 19, from Noon- 4:30 p.m. and Thursday, August 20 from 7:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. Exhibitor set-up begins on Tuesday, August 18 from 3 – 5 p.m. Exhibits need to be ready by 11 a.m. on Wednesday, August 19. Tear down begins at 2:45 p.m. on Thursday, August 20 with all displays removed by 4 p.m. Please contact Pat Holder at 512/349-7470 for display table availability and assignments.

## SILENT AUCTION

The AAIDD – Texas Chapter Silent Auction is held in the Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, August 19 from Noon – 4:30 p.m. and Thursday, August 20 from 7:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. Show your support for the association and participate in the Silent Auction. If you have an item that you would like to donate, contact Susanne Deiter, at 210-845-2628 or by email at [susannedeiter1964@gmail.com](mailto:susannedeiter1964@gmail.com). Proceeds from the auction will help support the convention. See you there!

## HHSC & TMHP INFORMATION TABLES (AUGUST 19TH AND 20TH)

Representatives from various HHSC departments including Medicaid Enrollment, Program Enrollment Services (PES), IDD Utilization Review (IDD UR), Contracts, and Provider Monitoring will be available to assist both providers and LIDDA staff. In addition, TMHP (Texas Medicaid Health Partnership) representatives will host a dedicated table to address TMHP billing inquiries and concerns. HHSC encourages attendees to bring specific issues, questions, and related documentation, such as DLN numbers, case numbers, LON increase denial letters, or other pertinent materials to facilitate discussion of client and facility matters. The representatives will be available from 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. on both days. LIDDA staff and Providers are invited to participate.

## SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

As a “Green” initiative, we will post the speaker presentations to the website following the Convention. Speakers will provide a short summary of their presentation onsite. Thank you for your cooperation.

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If your organization is interested in a sponsorship opportunity, please check the appropriate box on the registration form. When completing the registration, be sure that the company name is printed exactly as it is to appear in the promotional materials. Sponsors receive the following benefits for their participation at the Convention: listing on sign at the convention; recognition in the convention program (if committed 30 days in advance), company name posted on the association website, recognition in the association newsletter and sponsor ribbon on name badge at the convention.

# TAMD / TAMR / AAIDD Texas Chapter Board Chairs and Presidents\*

## Texas Association on Mental Deficiency (TAMD) Board CHAIRS

- 1976 Dr. Margaret Noyes, Texas Women's University
- 1977 Dr. John Carley, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- 1978 Dr. W. H. Lowry, Mexia State School
- 1979 Dr. Jon Hannum, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- 1980 Dr. Vearl McDaniel, Ft. Worth State School
- 1981 Spencer McClure, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- 1982 James Armstrong, Corpus Christi State School
- 1983 Harvey Heyman, Amarillo State Center
- 1984 Aurelio (Ray) Valdez, El Paso State Center
- 1985 Edward (Sandy) Livingston, Tarrant County MHMR Center

## Texas Association on Mental Deficiency (TAMD) Board PRESIDENTS

- 1986 Gretchen Claiborne, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- 1987 Joe Emerson, Richmond State School
- 1988 Richard Browder, Amarillo State Center

## Texas Association on Mental Retardation (TAMR) Board PRESIDENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1989 Dr. Ellis (Pat) Craig, Consulting Psychologist       | 1998 Dr. Sharon Coutryer, Dallas County MHMR        |
| 1990 Carl Kelly, MHMR Services of Texoma                  | 1999 Mel Hughes, Tarrant County MHMR Center         |
| 1991 Martin Woodard, Beaumont State Center                | 2000 Barbara Hokom, Martin Luther Homes of Texas    |
| 1992 Judy Schmid, Richmond State School                   | 2001 Richard Garnett, Private Practice              |
| 1993 Helen FitzSimmons, Develo-Cepts, Inc                 | 2002 Jeanne Page, Daybreak Community Services       |
| 1994 Lloyd Bergman, MHMR Services of Texoma               | 2003 Louise Lynch, Austin-Travis County MHMR Center |
| 1995 Danette Castle, Lubbock Regional MHMR                | 2004 Dr. Charlotte Kimmel, Mexia State School       |
| 1996 Carole Smith, Private Providers Association of Texas | 2005 Alan Garmes, St. Giles Living Centers          |
| 1997 David Southern, Southern Concepts                    | 2006 Cynthia King, Vita Living Foundation           |

## American Association on Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) TEXAS CHAPTER Board Presidents

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2007 Robert Welsh, Tarrant County MHMR Center           | 2017 Dr. Ollie Seay, Texas State University         |
| 2008 Kim Littlejohn, Austin-Travis County MHMR Center   | 2018 Dr. Ellis (Pat) Craig, Consulting Psychologist |
| 2009 W. Terry Crocker, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health | 2019 Melissa Whitworth, Bluebonnet Trails           |
| 2010 Maria Quintero, MHMR of Harris County              | 2020 Cheryl Petty, Integral Care                    |
| 2011 Dr. Ellis (Pat) Craig, Consulting Psychologist     | 2021 Dr. Charlotte Kimmel, Private Practice         |
| 2012 Shelly Heck, Daybreak Community Services           | 2022 Cheryl Petty, Integral Care                    |
| 2013 Dion White, Center for Life Resources              | 2023 Toye Babb, The Arc of Greater Beaumont         |
| 2014 Jermaine East, MHMR of Brazos Valley               | 2024 Toye Babb, The Arc of Greater Beaumont         |
| 2015 Margo Childs, MHMR of Harris County                | 2025 Carey Amthor, Friends for Life                 |
| 2016 Connie Cisneros, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health  | 2026 Ken Winston, Integral Care                     |

\*Some historical materials and references in this program contain terminology that is now considered outdated and offensive, including terms formerly used in medical, educational, and legal systems. These terms are included only to preserve the historical accuracy and context of the field's evolution. The AAIDD Texas Chapter affirms its commitment to respectful, person-centered language and to the dignity, inclusion, and rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2026 AAIDD Texas Chapter Board of Directors

### President

**Ken Winston**  
Integral Care

### President - Elect

**Susanne Deiter**  
Destination Independence LLC

### Past President

**Carey Amthor**  
Friends for Life

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**Shebli Davenport**  
Better Lives Senior Associate,  
Practicum Coordinator, Texas A&M

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**Julie Blacklock**  
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**Margo Childs**  
Independent

**Ramona Salomons**  
Nueces Center for MH and ID

**Dion White**  
Center for Life Resources

**Cheryl Wilson**  
Integral Care

**Pat Holder**  
Convention Manager

# CONVENTION COMMITTEE

## 50th Annual Convention Committee

**Susanne Deiter, Chair**

Destination Independence LLC

**Carey Amthor**

Friends for Life

**Toye Babb**

Advocate

**Linda Bailey**

Evergreen Life Services

**Julie Blacklock**

Twogether Consulting, Ltd.

**Margo Childs**

Independent

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Better Lives Senior Associate;  
Practicum Coordinator, Texas A&M

**Amber Jones**

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**Ramona Salomons**

Nueces Center for MH and ID

**Dion White**

Center for Life Resources

**Cheryl Wilson**

Integral Care

**Ken Winston, Chair**

Integral Care

# REGISTRATION INFO

## AAIDD 50th Annual Convention

### “50 Years of Inclusion: Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future”

Omni Corpus Christi Hotel • Corpus Christi, Texas • August 18 - 21, 2026

To Register Online visit our website - [www.aaidctx.org](http://www.aaidctx.org)

- **Cancellation Policy:** No refunds will be given after **July 27, 2026**; however, substitutions will be permitted.
- For best rates, be sure to register by the earlybird cut-off of July 27, 2026.
- Special needs? Interested in Convention sponsorship? Questions? Contact Pat Holder, Convention Manager at 512/349-7470 or [patholder@austin.rr.com](mailto:patholder@austin.rr.com).

★★★ Join AAIDD Texas Chapter now! If you sign up now, you can register at the member rate. Membership to AAIDD Texas Chapter is an **Individual** membership. Visit [aaid.org](http://aaid.org) ★★★

### Registration Fees\*

	Early Bird Until 7/27/26	After 7/27/26 and on-site
Full Convention - Member	\$350	\$400
Full Convention - Non-Member	\$400	\$450
Daily Rate	\$150	\$180
Guest/Spouse	\$150	\$180

\*Fees for full convention attendees include Wednesday – Friday sessions, daily coffee breaks and the Thursday Awards Luncheon. The daily rate includes the sessions, coffee breaks and meal functions scheduled on that day.

Group Discount (\$15.00/person) is available for full convention registration of (3) or more from your facility/agency/company. **To receive the group discount for multiple attendees, please register the group together online. Late additions will be charged as a separate submission and will not receive a discount.**

### Exhibitor Information

	Early Bird Until 7/27/26	After 7/27/26 and on-site
Exhibit Fee	\$580	\$630

Exhibit fee includes one (1) complimentary registration, one six foot skirted table and two chairs. Other company representatives will need to pay the additional exhibitor fee (\$195/person). Only representatives who are employed by the exhibiting companies will receive this rate. All other visitors must pay non-member rate. Contact Pat Holder at 512/349-7470 for booth availability.

### Convention Sponsorship

Diamond	\$1,000
Platinum	\$750
Gold	\$500
Silver	\$400
Bronze	\$250

If you are interested in Event Sponsorship, contact Pat Holder at 512/349-7470.