

Autumn 2025 Newsletter

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The Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care at UCLA has very active teams working on basic research, drug discovery, biomarkers for early diagnosis, and clinical activity, including clinical trials, cognitive testing, and patient care.

Leading the Next Generation of Discovery at the Easton Center

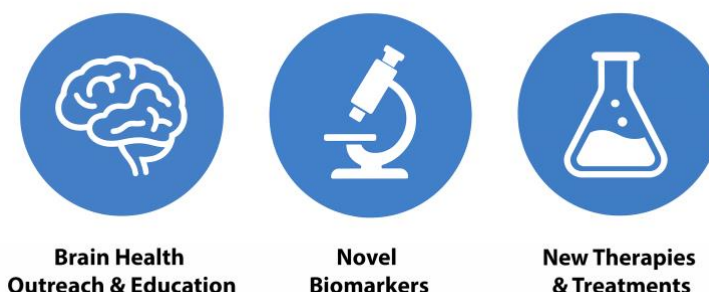


By: [Jason Hinman, MD, PhD](#), Director of the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care at UCLA

I am honored and delighted to serve as the next Director of the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care. Over the past decade, research inspired by the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) has transformed how we diagnose and manage people at risk for or living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Newly approved FDA biomarkers and anti-amyloid therapies are opening the door to a new era in brain health. These advances demand fresh thinking—about how, when, and where we diagnose cognitive impairment, and how our health systems can adapt to deliver these emerging treatments. While they represent tremendous progress, we recognize that they are not a cure. Still, they crystallize a clearer path forward, one that I am eager to help shape in this new leadership role.

As Director, I am privileged to guide the work of an extraordinary group of professionals. Since joining the UCLA faculty in 2013, I have admired the Easton Center's relentless focus on what the late Jim Easton called ***"the therapeutic imperative"***—our shared obligation to pursue treatments for Alzheimer's disease and dementia. I believe this mission rests on three key priorities that will define the next era of care, discovery, and progress. Spread across these three areas is the concept that we must broaden our reach to include the experience and biology of a wider variety of individuals at-risk for and suffering with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. As research from the Center has shown, different racial and ethnic groups have different perspectives, genetics, and biology associated with the development of cognitive impairment and dementia. In a vibrant region like Southern California, meeting the needs of our community means recognizing and embracing that complexity. Some may call this precision medicine, but it also reflects a simple truth: each person's journey with cognitive change is shaped by their culture, environment, genetics, biology, and life experience.

I intend to prioritize this principle of inclusion across three major domains. First, Center outreach and education efforts will focus on broadening the definition of brain health and do so in ways that meet multiple cultural understandings of “a healthy brain”. This educational mission will feed and inform our research and care in two other critical domains. Secondly, the Center will focus on the development and deployment of emerging and novel biomarkers for brain health to spur early recognition of the many forms cognitive impairment and dementia including Alzheimer’s disease, vascular dementia, and other conditions. By helping to identify and stage the biologic processes that lead to cognitive impairment and dementia using biomarkers, we can apply new therapies in a more impactful way more precisely. And thirdly, despite recent therapeutic advances, new and novel treatments for all forms of dementia remain desperately needed. With the Center’s established track record in therapeutic target identification and drug discovery, we will prioritize the development, testing, and validation of new therapies.



It is my sincere hope that the coming decade will fulfill the vision set forth by the National Alzheimer’s Project Act—to prevent, halt, or reverse Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias—and that the UCLA Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Research and Care will play a meaningful part in realizing that goal. If you share that vision, please join us by contributing through participation, philanthropy, or partnership.



Progress in Research: Highlights from AAIC 2025

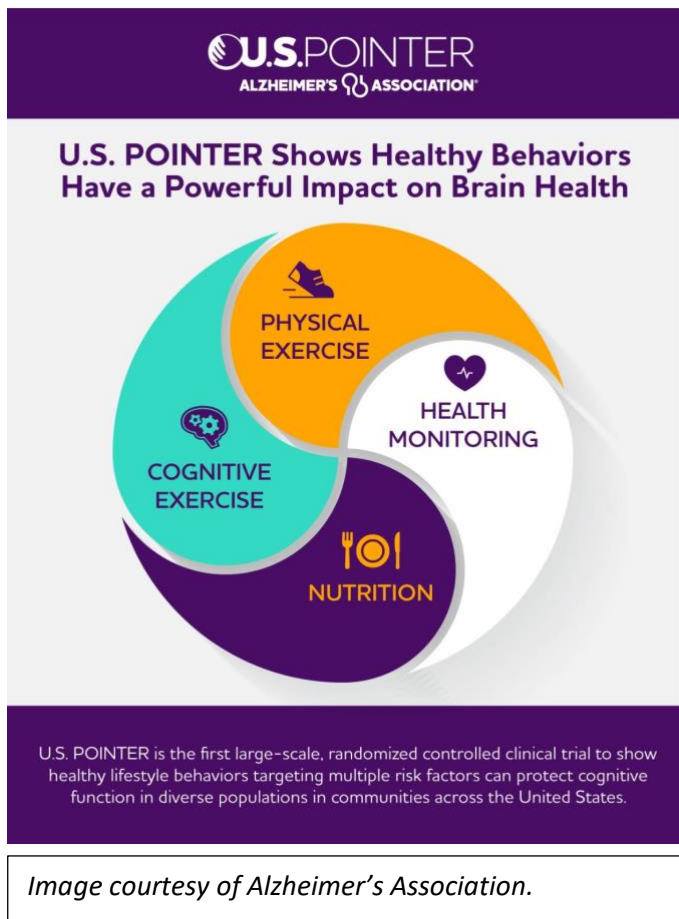


By: [Leila Parand, MD](#), Assistant Clinical Professor of Neurology and Neurobehavior Specialist at the UCLA Memory Clinic

Lifestyle Trial Shows Real-World Brain Benefits

At this year’s Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC 2025), researchers shared encouraging news from the U.S. POINTER trial, a nationwide lifestyle study, testing whether everyday habits can protect brain health. Over two years, older adults at risk for memory decline took part in programs focusing on physical activity, heart-healthy diet, cognitive and social engagement, and regular monitoring of health factors.

Both groups—those following a self-guided plan and those receiving structured coaching showed improved cognitive performance, with the most significant gains in a structured program. Benefits were consistent across sex, race, and genetic risk and were maintained for at least two years. For caregivers, this confirms that daily actions, including moving more, eating well, and staying socially connected, can make a measurable difference in thinking and memory.



Blood Tests Edge Closer to Everyday Clinical Use

Another major announcement came from the release of the first Alzheimer's Association clinical practice guideline for blood-based biomarkers (BBMs). Blood tests that can indicate Alzheimer's-related changes, such as amyloid or tau buildup, reach $\geq 90\%$ sensitivity and $\geq 75\%$ specificity; they can be used as a triage step before confirmatory PET or spinal-fluid test. If they meet both $\geq 90\%$ thresholds, they may even substitute for PET and spinal fluid studies. These guidelines move BBMs closer to routine practice. For caregivers, this means families may see blood tests added to diagnostic discussions, making earlier and more accurate evaluation possible, especially in communities without access to advanced imaging.

Healthy Habits and Access Protect the Brain

Beyond POINTER, several studies reinforced how lifestyle and environment shape brain health. A large analysis found that older adults participating in the SNAP nutrition-assistance program maintained better cognitive performance over a decade—equivalent to two or

three additional years of healthy cognition. Another study linked regular walking and activity with slower decline even among those carrying the high-risk APOE $\epsilon 4$ gene, while environmental data tied past lead exposure to higher dementia risk later in life. Together, these findings underline that individual choices and public policy both matter.

For caregivers, it's a reminder that brain health isn't only about medications—it's about community resources, access to nutritious food, safe places to move, and social connection. Supporting loved ones in these areas truly makes a difference.

New Alzheimer's Treatments Enter Everyday Practice

Finally, AAIC 2025 showed updates on lecanemab and donanemab, two anti-amyloid antibodies now being used in memory clinics. Real-world data show that their safety and effectiveness align with clinical trials, with patients and families reporting satisfaction. Long-term results (up to four years for lecanemab) and work on simpler subcutaneous dosing were shared, signaling progress toward more accessible care. For families, the message is balance: combine disease-modifying therapies, where appropriate, with the same healthy lifestyle principles proven in POINTER to build brain resilience.

Take Action

- Encourage daily movement—walking, light strength work, or dance.
- Focus on balanced meals rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish.

- Stay socially and mentally active—book clubs, puzzles, volunteering.
- Ask providers about blood-based Alzheimer’s tests and whether your loved one could benefit.

References:

Alzheimer’s Association (2025, July 31). “*Research Advances from the 2025 Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC 2025)*.” <https://aaic.alz.org/releases-2025/highlights-aaic-2025.asp>

Baker LD, et al. Structured vs Self-Guided Multidomain Lifestyle Interventions for Global Cognitive Function: The US POINTER Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA*. 2025;334(8):681–691. doi:10.1001/jama.2025.12923

Palmqvist S, et al. *Alzheimer's Association Clinical Practice Guideline on the use of blood-based biomarkers in the diagnostic workup of suspected Alzheimer's disease within specialized care settings*. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2025 Jul;21(7):e70535. doi: 10.1002/alz.70535. PMID: 40729527; PMCID: PMC12306682.

Paczynski M, et al. *Lecanemab Treatment in a Specialty Memory Clinic*. *JAMA Neurol*. 2025;82(7):655–665. doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2025.1232

To learn more about Alzheimer’s disease treatment and care at UCLA, please speak with your primary care doctor or call the **UCLA Amyloid Immunotherapy Care Program** at **(310) 794-1195**.

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Updates from BEAM



By: Celab Hong, President (2025-2026) of BEAM at UCLA

Brain-health Education and Advocacy Movement (BEAM) at UCLA is an undergraduate organization founded last year (2024) in affiliation with the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Research and Care at UCLA. To kick off the new school year, our officer team participated in the campus-wide Enormous Activities Fair and where the goal was to recruit new members and to raise our profile on campus. The event proved to be a wonderful success, and due to these efforts,

we welcomed 30 ambitious, motivated, and enthusiastic members. During week 3 of the quarter, we held our welcome meeting where members were introduced to the organization’s goals and had the opportunity to establish connections that will be instrumental in the year ahead. We would like to thank Dr. Jason Hinman, Monica Moore, Nancy Osuch, Samantha Shah, and Dorothy Lie for their continued support throughout this ongoing process. During the remaining weeks of the fall quarter, BEAM will continue to hold weekly meetings on topics such as dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, caregiver support,

and the administration of a brain health screener. Members will also participate in several community outreach events, caregiver support group observations, and socials during this time.

As the new academic year begins, BEAM is excited to start working with our members and staff to contribute to community outreach events and research advancements in Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Our goals for this year include serving the greater Los Angeles community through activities such as brain-health screenings, clinical research recruitment, and memory cafes. Additionally, we aim to contribute to advancements in neurodegenerative research by having members partner with labs across UCLA. Ultimately, our organization plans to collect data from brain health screenings and conduct our own research using this data. Through education, outreach, and research, BEAM is committed to fostering a more informed and proactive community in the fight against Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

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Clinical Research Opportunities

*Help us learn more about Alzheimer's disease by joining a research study. If you're interested, simply scan the QR code and complete the short form. Our team will reach out to ask a few simple questions. When a study is a suitable fit for you, we will contact you with further information. For additional information, please reach out to us at **(310) 794-6191**.*

Below are the current recruiting trials. For a complete list of enrolling studies, visit our website at <https://eastonad.ucla.edu/>.



OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES:

- [Alzheimer's Disease Research Center - Biomarkers in Neurodegenerative Disease \(ADRC-BIND\)](#)
- [ARTFL-LEFFTDS Longitudinal Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration \(ALLFTD\)](#)
- [BrightFocus Neuroimaging in Aging Study](#)
- [Dementia Research, Education, and Advancement in Los Angeles \(DREAM-LA\)](#)
- [Dementia Research Focus Group](#)
- [Family History and Genetics Risk Factors for Dementia Focus Group](#)
- [Music Stimulation to Improve Cognition \(MUSIC\)](#)
- [National Institute on Aging Alzheimer's Disease Family Based Study \(NIA-AD-FBS\)](#)

INTERVENTIONAL STUDIES:

- [Brain Recovery and Individualized Neuromodulation \(BRAIN Trial\)](#)
- [Brain Tau PET Histopathological Study](#)
- [Microbiota Mediated Flavonoid Metabolites for Cognitive Health \(MAEVE\)](#)
- [Modulating Memory with Low-Intensity Focused Ultrasound \(LIFUP-MCIAD\)](#)

- [Protocol for Maintaining and Improving Mental Status in Alzheimer's Disease \(PROMIS-AD\)](#)
- [Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation \(TMS\) for Memory Impairment in Old Adults \(MCI iTBS\)](#)

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For more information on our upcoming lectures and events, please visit the Easton Center [Community Calendar](#).

Santa Monica Walk to End Alzheimer's at Crescent Bay Park

Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025

Time: Walk site opens at 9:00 PM (PST)

Location: Crescent Bay Park

2000 Ocean Avenue

Santa Monica, CA 90407

Join the UCLA Easton Center as we support the Alzheimer's Association in their annual Walk to End Alzheimer's in Santa Monica. The Easton Center will have a table to share information about diagnosis, brain health, treatment, and clinical trials. <http://act.alz.org/goto/UCLAEastonCenter>

Care. Cure. Prevent. IV

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2025

Time: 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM (PST)

Platform: Virtual/Zoom

The Easton Center's Leila Parand, MD, will be part of a dynamic panel that will share the latest breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research and treatment options. They will discuss the impact of brain disease on families, what to do after diagnosis, and how to manage challenges that commonly result from changing family dynamics. Please submit your questions at registration.

Registration link coming soon.

For more information, please visit:

<https://thekensingtonredondobeach.com/events/care-cure-prevent/>

25th Annual C.A.L.M. Caregiver Conference – Empower to Thrive

Date: Saturday, November 8, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM (PST)

Location: USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology

3715 McClintock Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90089

This free, in-person event is dedicated to empowering and uplifting family caregivers through expert-led presentations, interactive breakout sessions, an all-day Relaxation Room, and an all-

day Resource Fair. The day will conclude with a special afternoon Caregiver Film Festival! Free admission. Free parking. Free lunch! (registration required). The UCLA Easton Center will be on site with educational information about diagnosis, caregiving, research, and clinical trials.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/empowered-to-thrive-25th-annual-calm-caregiver-conference-tickets-1623458039699?aff=oddtcreator>

Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, the Easton Center continues to make remarkable strides in Alzheimer's research and care at UCLA. Your generosity fuels hope and brings us closer to a world free from dementia. Now, more than ever, your support is vital to sustaining Alzheimer's research and preserving the progress we've made. Every contribution—large or small—makes a meaningful difference. *Please consider making a gift today!*

<https://eastonad.ucla.edu/donate>

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