

Winter 2025 Newsletter

| [Note from Director\(s\)](#) |
| [Inspiring the Next Generation of Neuroscientists](#) |
| [New Addition to the Easton Center](#) | [Clinical Trials](#) | [Upcoming Events](#) |

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.

Note from Director(s)



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

The past year has brought remarkable progress in dementia research and treatment, alongside some challenges. At UCLA, we have reached significant milestones, including the launch of our [UCLA Amyloid Immunotherapy Care \(AIC\) Program](#). This innovative clinical initiative represents a turning point in Alzheimer's Disease (AD) treatment, making experimental therapies a reality. In collaboration with five other UC Health campuses across California, Easton Center faculty have established shared clinical guidelines to ensure the safe and responsible use of these groundbreaking medications.

A major achievement of the AIC Program was the treatment of our first patient in May 2024. Since then, we have made two pioneering AD treatments—lecanemab and donanemab—available to eligible patients. As we work to expand access to these therapies and intervene before dementia symptoms become irreversible, we also recognize the limitations of these medications. Yet, the field is not slowing down. Beyond amyloid-targeting treatments, new therapeutic approaches are advancing to the final stages of clinical testing. The dedication of our faculty, staff, and nursing teams within the AIC is driving the creation of a streamlined care pipeline, ensuring that future innovations reach patients faster.

However, the past year also brought challenges. News reports surfaced detailing questionable scientific practices, leading to allegations of conflicts of interest and misconduct among high-profile AD researchers. This is a sobering reminder that the urgency to find treatments for a previously untreatable condition must never come at the expense of scientific integrity. At the Easton Center, we embrace this urgency while upholding the highest standards of excellence in our research, care, and outreach. Most of the dedicated physicians, scientists, and trainees around the world working on dementia remain

focused on delivering robust results without compromise and all those at the Easton Center are among those dedicated individuals.

Later in this newsletter, we highlight the recent work of Dr. Lorena Monseratt and Jessica Morales on “Inspiring the Next Generation of Neuroscientists,” formerly led by Dr. Maryam Beigi and currently led by Dr. Mirella Díaz-Santos. This exciting program brings local Los Angeles students aspiring to a career in STEM and Neuroscience to the UCLA Campus and the Easton Center for summer programs focused on the basics of dementia, neurodegeneration, clinical research, and the scientific environment of labs and clinics. It forms the basis of a critical pipeline to bring a new generation of young minds to tackle the challenge of dementia.

The fall season also marked two major events celebrating scientific discovery. Thanks to the continued generosity of the Waxman Family Foundation, we hosted the second annual Waxman Drive Symposium on November 21st. This year’s fellowship awardees, Dr. William Flavin from [Dr. Chao Peng’s lab](#) and Dr. Fanny Etienne from the [De Biase Lab](#), are conducting pioneering research on neurodegeneration. Dr. Flavin is investigating age-related genes that influence tau clearance in neurons and mouse models, while Dr. Etienne is studying how microglia, a specialized immune cell in the brain, drive amyloid clearance. Their work builds upon the success of our 2023 award winners, who have since continued their efforts in AD drug discovery.



Photo: (left to right) Dr. Jason Hinman, Mr. Mark Waxman, Dr. Fanny Etienne, Dr. William Flavin, Dr. Leslie Waxman, and Dr. S. Thomas Carmichael.

On December 4th, the Easton Center and the Department of Neurology hosted the 34th Annual Turken Symposium, supported by the Turken Foundation and Alzheimer’s LA. This well-attended event showcased the research of our 2023 Turken Award winner, Dr. Kacie Deters, and this year’s recipient, [Dr. Chao Peng](#). Dr. Peng presented his groundbreaking work on how modifications to alpha-synuclein and tau occur in models of Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s Disease, as well as his efforts to map the spread of tau in the AD brain. With the support of the Turken Award, he will continue expanding this critical research.



Thank you!

Your **GIFT**
helps us
[advance]
research.

Photo: (left to right) Ms. Heather Cooper Ortner, Dr. Chao Peng, Ms. Beth Devermont, and Dr. Jason Hinman.

The Easton Center remains committed to advancing the field of Alzheimer's research and treatment. As we move into 2025, we are excited for the new discoveries and innovations that will help keep our brains healthy and active.

▲ TOP

Inspiring the Next Generation of Neuroscientists

By: [Lorena Monserratt, PhD](#), Research Psychologist and Rater, Katherine and Benjamin Kagan Alzheimer's Disease Treatment



As the need for diversity in the STEM field continues to grow, the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Care and Research at UCLA has launched a neuroscience program to inspire and empower underrepresented high school students to pursue careers in neuroscience, specifically Alzheimer's disease and related dementia research. The program is designed to provide mentorship, exposure to cutting-edge research, and educational experiences that connect students from underrepresented communities to the many opportunities available in the neuroscience field.

The program outlines several components to introduce high school students to neuroscience. One key component is the *UCLA High School Neuroscience Grand Rounds*, held monthly and offers students virtual seminars on a wide range of neuroscience topics. Each seminar is led by an expert in the field, exposing students to various neuroscience concepts and sparking their interest.

Another exciting feature is *Neuropeek*, a series of tours that gives students firsthand exposure to cutting-edge neuroscience research. Students observe brain-cutting sessions, visit research labs, and engage

with leading researchers, providing a rare opportunity to see science in action and learn from experts at the forefront of the field.

In addition, the *Alzheimer's Awareness and Research Club* encourages and provides a framework for high school students to establish clubs dedicated to raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and health disparities faced by underrepresented communities. These student-led clubs organize events and seminars, providing a platform to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease while offering support to students whose family members may have been diagnosed with the disease. Currently, we have students who have established or are in the process of establishing Alzheimer's Awareness and Research Clubs both in California and beyond. Recently, an Alzheimer's Awareness Club from Redondo Union High School, headed by Bella Martinez, organized a fundraiser, donating the proceeds to the Mary S. Easton Center. We aspire for these high school clubs to expand and become catalysts for raising awareness about Alzheimer's in their communities.

One of the most impactful elements of the program is the [Neuroscience High School Summer Program](#). It is designed for in-person and virtual participation; the summer program offers a comprehensive blend of hands-on learning and professional development. Students participate in neuroscience and health disparity seminars, neurology grand rounds, brain-cutting sessions, and a journal club. This summer, mentorship will play a pivotal role in the program. Students will have access to a mentor, either a graduate student or a professional in neuroscience, who will offer guidance throughout the program. Toward the end of the summer program, students will complete a research project that reflects their learning, culminating in a presentation to faculty and peers. This experience not only builds students' scientific knowledge but also fosters critical skills in public speaking, problem-solving, and collaboration.

This innovative neuroscience program is not just about providing students with scientific knowledge; it's about building a pipeline for underrepresented youth to enter and succeed in neuroscience. By offering a combination of immersive experiences, mentorship, and awareness of health disparities, the program ensures that students from all backgrounds can explore their interests, develop their skills, and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive scientific community.



For more information about the UCLA Neuroscience High School Scholars Program, please visit: <https://eastonad.ucla.edu/about/neuroscience-high-school-scholars-program>

If you wish to donate to help the Easton Center expand and share our knowledge or accelerate innovative research on Alzheimer's disease, please click [here](#) to donate online, call (424) 325-9310, or visit <https://eastonad.ucla.edu/donate>.

New Addition to the Easton Center

Please join us in welcoming a new staff member to the Easton Center.



Photo: [Essence Horton, RN, BSN](#), Triage Registered Nurse

Essence Horton, RN, BSN, is the new Nurse Navigator for the UCLA Neurology Integrated Memory Clinic. She is a registered nurse who obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. Before this role, Essence was part of the UCLA Ronald Reagan float pool, which gave her expertise in many departments, including geriatrics, post-stroke, research, and care coordination.

Essence is excited to transition into this role to provide support and navigate our patients and families with holistic care in UCLA Neurology Integrated Memory Clinic.

[▲ TOP](#)

Clinical Research Opportunities

If you would like to advance Alzheimer's disease research, please consider being a study participant.

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 Neuroimaging Initiative 4 \(ADNI4\) Protocol](#)
- [Alzheimer's Disease Research Center - Biomarkers in Neurodegenerative Disease \(ADRC-BIND\)](#)
- [ARTFL-LEFFTDS Longitudinal Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration \(ALLFTD\)](#)
- [Dementia Research, Education, and Advancement in Los Angeles \(DREAM-LA\)](#)
- [Dementia Research Focus Group](#)
- [Family History and Genetics Risk Factors for Dementia Focus Group](#)
- [Microbiota Mediated Flavonoid Metabolites for Cognitive Health \(MAEVE\)](#)
- [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](#)
- [Modulating Memory with Low-Intensity Focused Ultrasound \(LIFUP-MCIAD\)](#)
- [Protocol for Maintaining and Improving Mental Status in Alzheimer's Disease \(PROMIS-AD\)](#)
- [SUVEN Study](#)

[▲ TOP](#)



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

Alzheimer's Los Angeles Visionary Women's Afternoon Tea

Date: Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Time: 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM (PST)

Location: The London West Hollywood

1020 N. San Vicente Boulevard

West Hollywood, CA 90069

Join Alzheimer's Los Angeles in celebrating remarkable individuals who are making a difference in the lives of people with Alzheimer's Disease and their families.

To purchase a ticket: <https://www.alzheimersla.org/get-involved/events/visionary-women/>

LA Care Partner Roundtable

Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (PST)

Location: East LA Community Resource Center

4801 Whittier Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90022

The ELHA team is thrilled to kick off a new year of LA Care Partner Roundtable meetings on March 5th at the LA Care East LA Resource Center! We're excited to connect with new partners, learn about their projects, and explore collaborative opportunities to promote health and well-being in our community. Here's to a productive and inspiring year of partnerships and shared impact!

Keiro Caregiver Conference San Gabriel Valley

Date: Saturday, March 15, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (PST)

Location: East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center

1203 West Puente Avenue

West Covina, CA 91790

Join the Easton Center for the Keiro Caregiver Conference focused on *Building a Strong Care Foundation*. This year's conference will provide valuable insights through advanced planning, practical strategies, and expert guidance to empower caregivers to plan for not only their loved one's future but also their own. The Easton Center will share information about brain health, research, and clinical trials.

Registration is required as capacity will be limited on a first-come, first-served basis.

Registrations close on Friday, February 28, 2025. [\[English Flyer\]](#)

Visit: <https://www.keiro.org/what-we-do/events/keiro-caregiver-conference>

Costello Senior Center St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Date: Monday, March 17, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM (PST)

Location: Costello Lou Jr. Senior Center

3121 E. Olympic Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90023

Join ELHA Lab at the Costello Senior Citizen Center's St. Patrick's Day Celebration on Monday, March 17th, from 11 AM to 2 PM! We're excited to table at this festive event and present a special 20-minute session on brain health and Alzheimer's prevention. Stop by to learn valuable tips, pick up educational materials, and celebrate with raffles, karaoke, dancing, and light refreshments. Let's embrace community, wellness, and a bit of St. Patrick's Day luck together! [\[English Flyer\]](#) [\[Spanish Flyer\]](#)

Vision y Compromiso x ELHA Virtual Workshops

Date: March 18 - 20, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual Platform: TBD

The ELHA team is excited to announce a three-part virtual workshop in partnership with Visión y Compromiso on March 18th, 19th, and 20th! Dr. Diaz-Santos will lead this comprehensive series, diving deep into Alzheimer's Disease prevention, detection, diagnosis, and care management. This workshop is designed to empower Visión y Compromiso's promotoras de salud with the knowledge and tools they need to effectively educate and support their communities on this critical topic. We can't wait to collaborate and make a meaningful impact together!

Alzheimer's Basics and Caregiving

Date: Sunday, April 6, 2025

Time: 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM (PDT)

Location: Welbrook Memory Care Santa Monica

1450 17th Street

Santa Monica, CA 90404

Monica Moore, MSG, will present to the community and caregivers. This insightful session will cover the fundamentals of Alzheimer's disease, early warning signs, caregiving strategies, and the latest research. Whether you're a caregiver or simply want to learn more, you'll gain practical tools, expert guidance, and a deeper understanding of how to support those affected. [\[English Flyer\]](#)
RSVP to 424-282-3002.

Newsletter Editorial Team:

Co-Center Directors: [Jason Hinman, MD, PhD](#), and [Jeffrey Saver, MD, FAHA, FAAN, FANA](#)

California Alzheimer's Disease Center (CADC) Director: [Timothy Chang, MD, PhD](#)

Co-Directors of Training and Education Activities: [Monica Moore, MSG](#), [Mirella Díaz-Santos, PhD](#), and [Jennifer Adrissi, MD, MS](#)

Editor: [Nancy Osuch](#)

Mailing Address:

Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care at UCLA

710 Westwood Plaza, Room C-224

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1769

| <https://eastonad.ucla.edu/> | Center: (310) 794-3665 / Clinic Appointments: (310) 794-1195 |

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▲ TOP