



**Idaho State
University**

KASISKA DIVISION OF HEALTH SCIENCES

15TH ANNUAL GINNY THOMAS GERIATRIC SYMPOSIUM

*“The Power of Social Connection:
Addressing Loneliness and Isolation”*

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 | 2:00 – 5:00 pm (Mountain Time)

Locations:

**ISU Pond Student Union Building (SUB) Little Wood River Room, Pocatello
ISU Sam & Aline Skaggs Health Sciences Complex, Rooms 735 and 742, Meridian
Live Stream to satellite campuses, including PSB 107 in Anchorage, Alaska**

The 15th Annual Ginny Thomas Geriatric Symposium will focus on the theme of *The Power of Social Connection: Addressing Loneliness and Isolation*. Research and guidance from the U.S. Surgeon General highlight that chronic loneliness can be as harmful to health as smoking or obesity, increasing risk for heart disease, dementia, and depression.

This event aims to bring together older adults from the community, health care professionals, students, and experts in the field to discuss this important issue and explore how we all can foster meaningful social connections that promote health and resilience. The Symposium focuses on older adult communities, but this issue affects individuals of all ages.

Note: The schedule and content are subject to change.

Attendees are encouraged to refer to official event communications for any updates.

AGENDA

1:30 -2:00 PM	Registration and Check-in
2:00- 2:05 PM	Welcome and Introduction of Keynote Speaker • Christopher Owens, PharmD, MPH; Associate Vice President for Health Sciences, Idaho State University
2:05 - 2:25 PM	Keynote Presentation (originating from Pocatello) Title: "The Power of Social Connection" • Michelle Butterfield, Health Educator, Southeast Idaho Public Health
2:25 – 2:35 PM	Break ---Refreshments, visit the community resource exhibits
2:35 –3:35 PM	Panel Discussion (originating from Meridian) Moderator: Youssef Roman, PharmD, PhD, Idaho State University Panelists: • Janet J. Miller, Idaho Commission on Aging • Dr. Kara Kuntz, MD, St. Alphonsus Medical Center • Karianne Fallow, Idaho AARP State Director • Amanda Henscheid, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, Idaho State University • Elizabeth Johnsen, MBA, Behavioral Health Director, Community Plan of Idaho, Optum Whole Health
3:35 -3:50 PM	Break –prepare for Roundtable Discussions
3:50 - 4:50 PM	Interprofessional Case Study and Roundtables (on both campuses) Engaging case study discussion for all in-person participants
4:50 – 5:00 PM	Wrap-up and Concluding Remarks by Dr. Owens The event concludes, followed by dinner provided for community seniors, panelists, and faculty facilitators. Students will have dinner on their own.

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