



MEDIA RELEASE

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National Alliance for Caregiving Announces Staff and Board Leadership Changes

Rita Choula appointed to Board of Directors; two staff members promoted

Washington D.C. – April 20, 2022 – The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) has appointed Rita Choula, Director of Caregiving, AARP Public Policy Institute, to its Board of Directors and announced the promotion of Michael Wittke, MPA, to Vice President, Policy & Advocacy, and Lauren Tokarewich, MLIS, to Senior Manager, Special Projects. In addition, Sarah Callahan has joined the National Alliance for Caregiving as Advocacy Fellow.

Rita Choula is the Director of Caregiving with the AARP Public Policy Institute and brings both her professional expertise and lived experience to her new board leadership role at NAC. She leads and provides content expertise on family caregiving initiatives throughout AARP and externally. Her work bridges policy and research to practice, centered on identifying and supporting the needs of family caregivers, across generations, elevating the unique nature of each caregiving experience. Rita currently drives AARP's efforts to address systemic disparities and build equity in long-term care for Black, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander and LGBTQ older adults and their family caregivers.

Rita holds a master's degree in the Management of Aging Services from the University of Maryland Baltimore County. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Frontotemporal Dementia, Gerontological Society of America (GSA), American Society on Aging (ASA), and the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI). She is a recipient of the CARE 100 List of the Most Influential People in Care of 2020 and the National Hispanic Council on Aging Caregiving AARP Award of 2019.

Michael Reese Wittke, MPA., joined the National Alliance for Caregiving in 2016 as the Director of Advocacy. As NAC's new Vice President, Policy & Advocacy, he will focus on building the capacity of NAC's Advocacy department—bridging gaps between data and policy to address challenges facing family caregivers of older adults, people with disabilities, and those with serious or chronic conditions across the lifespan. In his role, Mike will lead NAC's national engagement strategy working with Congressional offices, federal agencies, the White House, and key national organizations. Mike has led efforts to support and implement key policy initiatives directly impacting family caregivers, including the R.A.I.S.E. Family Caregivers Act, The B.O.L.D. Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, and the national "Caregiving Corps." He has a bachelor's degree in Social Work, with honors, from the University of Utah and a master's degree in Public Administration, with a concentration in non-profit management, from American University. He is currently on the Board of Directors for the Friends of Theodore Roosevelt Island.

As Senior Manager, Special Projects, Lauren Tokarewich will develop and manage the projects that focus on specific conditions of care recipients or populations of caregivers. Lauren has co-authored *The Circle of Care Guidebook for Caregivers of Rare and or Serious Illnesses* and *Caregiving in a Diverse America: Beginning to Understand the Systemic Challenges Facing Family Caregivers* – both published in 2021. In addition to managing special projects, Lauren also provides communications support to NAC's programs, creating social media toolkits and managing NAC's social media presence, and she lends her library skills to curating the materials and resources on NAC's website and on www.TakeCare.community. Lauren has previously held the title of both Research Manager and Special Projects Associate at NAC. She has a Master of Library and Information Science, as well as a BA in history and English, both from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

As Advocacy Fellow, Sarah Callahan is responsible for advocating for national level policy improvements across the aging, healthcare, disability, financial security, and social service sectors. Sarah has a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of South Florida in Tampa, she has worked with the Florida Department of Health, for the local County Commissioner, for the county health department, and served on her undergraduate's Title IX board and Curriculum Policy Council. She recently completed her coursework at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for her MSPH in Public Health Policy and Management.

"I'm thrilled to see NAC grow stronger with the support of these talented and dedicated individuals who bring a wealth of professional and personal experience to our mission of building health, wealth, and equity for America's 53 million family caregivers," said Jason Resendez, President and CEO of the National Alliance for Caregiving. "I'm humbled to work alongside this team and I look forward to everything we accomplish together with, and for, family caregivers."

About the National Alliance for Caregiving

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on building health, wealth, and equity for family caregivers through research, innovation, and

advocacy. We envision a society that values, supports, and empowers family caregivers to thrive at home, work, and life. Learn more at <http://www.caregiving.org>.

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