



**Minnesota  
Legislative Task Force  
on Aging  
ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®**

# Who We Are

The **Alzheimer's Association** leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

# Common Terms

- Dementia is a general term for a particular group of symptoms, including difficulties with memory, language, and skills that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.
- Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder caused by damage to neurons in the brain. It is the most common cause of dementia.
- Caregiving for people with dementia is unpaid help provided by spouses, partners, adult children, other relatives and friends to people living with dementia.
  - There are many Minnesotans who do not self-identify as a caregiver

# Alzheimer's Disease in MN

- In 2020, 99,000 Minnesotans were living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. That number is expected to increase by 21.2% by 2025
- Most people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias (95%) have at least one other chronic condition, such as heart disease, diabetes, or stroke. Alzheimer's complicates the management of these chronic conditions, resulting in poorer health outcomes and quality of life and increased health care costs
- Older Black and Hispanic Americans are more likely to have Alzheimer's or another form of dementia and are more likely to not be diagnosed than older Americans
- Medicaid costs for caring for people with Alzheimer's disease in 2020 came to \$905 million. This number is projected to increase by 20.1% in 2025

# Caregivers

- In 2022, 163,000 Caregivers provided 225 million hours of unpaid care valued at \$5.3 billion
- Approximately one-quarter of dementia caregivers are “sandwich generation” caregivers — meaning that they care not only for an aging parent but also for at least one child
- Nearly 60% of Alzheimer’s and dementia caregivers rate the emotional stress of caregiving as high or very high. As many as 40% of family caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias suffer from depression.
- Caregiver burnout is the leading cause for placement in a residential setting like an Assisted Living or Nursing Home.
- Our Long-Term Services and Supports system would collapse without the contributions of unpaid caregivers

# Era of Treatment

- New FDA-approved treatments and others in the pipeline are offering hope for the Alzheimer's and dementia community.
- There are now two FDA-approved treatments (Leqembi and Aduhelm) that treat one of the underlying causes of Alzheimer's. Additional clinical trials are underway and offer the hope of additional treatments.
- It's important to remember that no two treatments are the same, even if they are in the same class of drug. They act differently in the brain, even if they achieve similar end results.
- As new treatments are approved, early detection and diagnosis are even more critical to ensure individuals receive the most benefit at the earliest point possible.
- One critical shortcoming we continue to see is the lack of diverse representation in Alzheimer's clinical trials. We must ensure treatments are effective for all populations.

# VOA-MN

- Culturally Responsive Caregiver Support and Dementia Services
- Caregiver Services support African American and East African older adults and their caregivers through support groups, health monitoring and education, and respite care.



# Supporting People with Dementia

Figure 1. Opportunities for Public Health Intervention Across the Dementia Life Course

RISK REDUCTION | Primary Prevention



EARLY DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS | Secondary Prevention



SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE | Tertiary Prevention



Healthy Cognitive Functioning

Pre-Symptomatic  
Brain Changes

Mild Cognitive  
Impairment

Mild  
Dementia

Moderate  
Dementia

Severe  
Dementia



# Alzheimer's and Public Health

- **Dementia Services Coordinator:** Invest in a full-time staff-person at MDH focusing on Alzheimer's disease. This role will work on increasing coordination within MDH and key partners like DHS, identifying service-gaps in Minnesota' dementia care continuum, and tracking progress towards the State Plan on Alzheimer's.
- **Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative:** The Alzheimer's Association supports increasing the funding for this program and adding Alzheimer's disease and dementia as a priority health area for the program.
- **Healthy Aging and Dementia Health Curriculum:** With an aging population and multi-generational households, more of Minnesota's youth are spending time with elders. We support developing a voluntary healthy aging and Alzheimer's health curriculum module for school health classes.

# Supporting Caregivers

- Respite Care Grants: Base funding for successful grant program that expands access to respite care for older adults and people with dementia.
- Live Well at Home Grants: The Live Well at Home Grant program is a proven resource to help seniors and people with dementia age in place, not in a more expensive residential program. The Live Well at Home Grant program funds providers across the state to expand access to essential services like respite care, chore services and other supports with the activities of daily living, and chronic condition management.

# Looking to the Future

# Simplify Elder Care System

- Educate Minnesotans about Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia
- Ensure that all health care settings, particularly primary care, are equipped with the tools to recognize the signs of dementia and refer their patients for a cognitive assessment.
- Raise awareness about available services and supports with a focus on early engagement for people with dementia and their caregivers
- Increase Alignment between EW, AC, and OAA service lines
  - Uniform assessment process and referral forms
  - Data collection

# Invest in What Works

- Support strapped Home and Community Based Service providers with sustained increases to the Elder Waiver
- Expand access to the services that make a difference like respite care
- Recognize the work that community partners like VOA-MN are already doing in the elder space and find creative ways to expand their reach

# The Washington Model:

- Washington State has successfully reached caregivers of individuals not yet eligible for Medicaid through their Medicaid Alternative Care (MAC) and Tailored Supports for Older Adults (TSOA) programs.
- Uniform screening of all caregiver participants
  - Caregiver specific service planning
  - Caregivers leverage benefit to obtain a wide array of services and supports including respite care, home-delivered meals, and minor home repairs
- As part of the requirement for the 1115 waiver, a preliminary analysis of the program found families enrolled in this program saw a decrease in emergency department visits, hospitalization, and enrollment in HCBS services.
- Caregivers also reported high levels of satisfaction with services and felt involved in the support they received.

# Stay Hopeful

- Minnesota elders make significant contributions to their communities
- For many people, Minnesota is a great place to age and there are outstanding organizations serving our elders
- With the right help at the right time, even more people with dementia can live fulfilling lives in the community of their choice
- We know more about Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia than ever before and are entering the era of treatment

# Questions?