

# Local Data to Drive Public Health Action

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

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## Quick Summary

### Using local data to inform planning, partnerships and systems change

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health analyzed hospitalization and public perception data to better understand the local impact of dementia. Findings showed the significant health and economic impact of dementia, and high community concern and support for risk reduction and caregiver services. Findings also showed low awareness of treatments and limited clinical discussion about risk reduction. These insights were translated into dashboards and data briefs, and then shared with partners to inform programs, strengthen collaboration, and elevate dementia as a public health priority.

Quality data and surveillance are essential for shaping policy, guiding systems-level decisions and informing effective public health practice. However, local-level data on brain health, dementia and caregiving are often limited. Analysis of hospitalization and other survey data help identify local impacts of dementia.

The **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH)** leveraged state-based, low-cost data sources to identify populations disproportionately impacted by dementia as part of the **Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map Strategist Program 2023** cohort. The LACDPH shared this data with multi-sector partners support aligned goals and drive collective impact.

### Leveraging Data to Inform Public Health Action

LACDPH conducted a landscape assessment to identify data sources that could provide localized insights on populations impacted by dementia. Using these sources, LACDPH analyzed hospitalization trends among people living with dementia including the associated economic impact and examined public perceptions about cognitive decline and caregiving.

Using hospital discharge data from the California Department of Health Care Access, LACDPH developed a dashboard to visualize local

hospitalization trends among people living with dementia. The department also developed a [peer-reviewed paper](#) examining the health and economic burden of comorbid dementia and type 2 diabetes in the region. Top findings include:

- » Patients with both dementia and diabetes had the longest median hospital stay (5 days) with the highest total expenses (\$71,389) compared with those living with just one condition or neither.

### HBI Road Map Strategist Program

#### Building local leadership to advance the public health approach to dementia

The Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map Strategist Program supports **local health departments** in advancing the public health approach to brain health, dementia and caregiving. Through funding, education and technical assistance, the program equips experienced public health professionals to **serve as systems change agents** guided by the [HBI State and Local Road Map for Public Health, 2023-2027](#).

The HBI Road Map Strategist Program is led by the Alzheimer's Association in partnership with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

- » Patients with both dementia and diabetes had a 49% higher odds of being hospitalized for extended periods of time (7+ days) compared with those without these conditions.
- » Only 18.2% of patients with dementia were discharged home, compared with 48.2% of those with diabetes alone.

Partnering with the University of California Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, LACDPH added dementia-related questions to opinion polls of Los Angeles County voters. These explored perceptions of cognitive screening, caregiving and advanced care planning, with key findings shared via [data briefs](#). Among respondents:

- » 92% believe caregiver training and support are important
- » 70% reported being somewhat or very worried about developing dementia
- » 88% believe there are steps that can be taken to reduce dementia risk
- » 62% strongly agreed they would want an early diagnosis
- » 17% were aware of new treatments
- » 13% reported discussing dementia risk reduction with a health care provider

## Impact and Sustainability

Participation in the HBI Road Map Strategist Program equipped the LACDPH with localized data to enhance public understanding of brain health, dementia and caregiving. These data informed public health programming and supported the integration of dementia as a priority within broader public health efforts. Data products were developed and shared with partners and the public, and incorporated into presentations and funding proposals to guide partner activities.

*“The Road Map Strategist Program allowed us to dedicate more time to data analysis and created new opportunities that we have continued to build on. For example, now that we are familiar with the hospitalization data and understand its capabilities, we’re now working on a new project related to dementia and falls.”*

-Noel Barragan  
Los Angeles County Department of  
Public Health,  
2023 HBI Road Map Strategist

These data also helped position brain health as an integral component of broader chronic disease prevention and health equity initiatives.

## Lessons Learned

- » **Leverage existing data sources to generate local insight:** State and local data sources, such as hospitalization and survey data, can be used to identify the health and economic impact of dementia and highlight populations most affected, even when dedicated dementia data are limited.
- » **Translate data into actionable tools for partners:** Developing data briefs, dashboards and presentations helps make complex data accessible and usable. Sharing these tools with partners supports coordinated planning, outreach and decision-making.
- » **Use data to drive systems-level change:** Local data can elevate dementia as a public health priority, inform program design and strengthen funding proposals. The [Data for Action Toolkit](#) is designed to help users to integrate data into planning processes and improve health outcomes.

Learn more about the public health approach to dementia at [alz.org/publichealth](https://alz.org/publichealth)



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