

RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH LOCAL DATA DISSEMINATION

PROBLEM

While national and state-level data on Alzheimer's and other dementias is regularly published, localized data are more difficult to obtain because fewer data sources on cognitive impairment are available at city and county levels. Also, local public health agencies may lack the time and resources necessary to obtain, analyze, package, and disseminate the data to the general public.

SOLUTION

Local data help people understand and contextualize the impact and burden Alzheimer's has within their communities. This increased understanding builds support among the public for responding to the growing challenges of dementia. Local data enables public health leaders, health systems, and policymakers to set priorities and tailor interventions to their communities. Using data like these is strategic action M-3 in the Healthy Brain Initiative's *State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia: The 2018-2023 Road Map*.

In June 2018, the Summit County Public Health Department (SCPHD) in Ohio published *Alzheimer's Disease in Summit County Statistics Brief* — a publication examining the impact and burden of Alzheimer's within Ohio's most populous county. SCPHD partnered closely with the Greater East Ohio Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to develop the brief, embracing the value

of local data to increase public awareness of cognitive health concerns and enable community leaders to begin planning a stronger community-wide response.

SCPHD performed local-level data analysis for the entire county as well as "clusters" — 20 sub-county geographic regions — on several factors associated with increased risk of Alzheimer's and other dementias, including age, gender, race, and education level. Poverty status was used to consider populations with potentially reduced access to medical care and supports for heart-healthy lifestyles. SCPHD also examined the Alzheimer's mortality rate from 2000 to 2016 and correlations with demographic factors.

When feasible, the brief contrasts the local-level data with national or Ohio-specific facts, helping readers consider how dementia differentially impacts Summit County.

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

Selected highlights of the brief are below. View the full brief online at scph.org/assessments-reports.

- **Gender:** Almost two-thirds of Americans living with Alzheimer's are women. While women make up 53% of county residents 65 and older, women accounted for 69% of Alzheimer's deaths in Summit County from 2012-2016.

- **Mortality:** From 2006 to 2016, the United States had a 26% increase in the age-adjusted death rate from Alzheimer's while Summit County had an increase of 30%.
- **Poverty:** The Akron Central cluster has the highest percentage of residents 65 and older living below the poverty line (22.9%) and the highest uninsured rate for residents 65 and older (15.8%). With less access to healthcare, these individuals likely also have less access to early or accurate diagnosis.
- **Age:** Age is the most significant risk factor for Alzheimer's dementia, though Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging. Within Summit County, the clusters with the highest percentages of adults aged 65 or older reside in Munroe Falls/Tallmadge (21.1%), Copley/Bath/Fairlawn (19.8%), Coventry/Green (19.8%), Franklin (19.4%), and Richfield/Boston (19.3%).

INITIAL OUTCOMES

The five month collaboration achieved the following:

- *Akron.com* and *The West Side Leader* both publicized the brief, leading to 42,372 print impressions
- The Greater East Ohio Area Chapter disseminated the brief, reaching 10,088 newsletter subscribers

The brief was released and promoted in June during national Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness month. It continues to inform residents and healthcare professionals about Alzheimer's, associated risk factors, and helps contextualize the burden of dementia throughout the community. The brief also points readers to ways they can access local community resources.

This analysis is helping identify priority clusters to target for intervention. The chapter and public health leaders are discussing additional actions in the HBI Road Map to implement.

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