

Alzheimer's Disease Action Plan for Puerto Rico 2015-2025

Executive Summary

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a neurological condition that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior (Alzheimer's Association [ALZ], 2015). From 2000 to 2012, the age adjusted death rate per 100,000 inhabitants, raised from 23.8 to 47.0 respectively (Puerto Rico Department of Health [PRDOH], 2012). This neurodegenerative disease has been the fourth cause of death in Puerto Rico (PR) since 2008, representing 6.4% of all deaths in 2010. This statistic serves as the basis for developing this *Alzheimer's disease Action Plan for PR* (PLAN), which is our strategic roadmap to address this public health problem in the commonwealth.

The PLAN responds to the World Health Organization's (WHO) call to action, by rating AD and other dementias as a public health priority. Furthermore, the PLAN concurs with the goals of the Puerto Rico Healthy People 2020 Strategic Plan, the Puerto Rico Chronic Disease Action Plan (2014-2020) and with the WHO report: Dementia: A public health priority.

The development of this PLAN and its pillar areas were selected through a study of needs identified by the Task Force appointed by the Secretary of Health, to write the PLAN. The focal areas of the PLAN were divided into seven pillars: 1) Public Policy 2) Public Health Efforts and Epidemiologic Surveillance 3) Home and Community Caregiving Services 4) Education and Training 5) Diagnosis and Treatment 6) Long Term Care Services and 7) Long-Term Care Financing. These focal areas include goals and specific objectives to be accomplished, as well as strategies and resources for its execution, and evaluation means for each objective. The implementation and evaluation of the PLAN will be accomplished by the PRDOH, our collaborators, and by other agencies providing services to people living with AD.

By implementing this PLAN, we want to assure accessibility to services, information about AD, provision of adequate health, and to deliver education services and support to people living with AD, their caregivers and relatives.

The PLAN will be disseminated among health professionals, centers and organizations providing services to elders, to universities, to the government and to the general population as well.

We expect this PLAN to be a meaningful resource for all those interested in approaching the impact of AD in PR, with a public health methodology. The Puerto Rico Department of Health, the Secretariat for Health Promotion and the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division, reassert their commitment to improving the quality of life of people living with AD and their caregivers.



Seven Pillars (Goals, Strategies and Objectives)

Public Policy:

Goal 1: Increase public policy efforts to guarantee access to services to people living with AD and their caregivers by 2025.

- Strategy: Create and implement public policies to improve the quality of life of people living with AD and their caregivers.
 - Objective 1.1: Analyze current laws to determine if they meet the needs of people living with AD and their caregivers.
 - Objective 1.2: Develop a protocol about the abuse and mistreatment of elders, including people living with AD.

Efforts in Public Health and Epidemiologic Surveillance:

Goal 2: Increase the research and epidemiological surveillance of people living with AD in PR by 2025.

- Strategy: Promote research and epidemiological surveillance of AD.
 - Objective 2.1: Increase by 50% the amount of physicians and hospital institutions reporting cases to the PRDOH.
 - Objective 2.2: Increase the amount of research related to AD.
 - Objective 2.3: Increase mistreatment and abuse surveillance.

Home and Community Caregiving:

Goal 3: Increase access to services for people living with AD and their caregivers, at the home and community levels.

- Strategy: Promote access to health and social services for people living with AD.
 - Objective 3.1: Develop an up-to-date services directory for people with AD and their caregivers.
 - Objective 3.2: Review a study of needs to identify access barriers to health and social services available for people living with AD.

Education and Training:

Goal 4: Increase AD awareness in Puerto Rico.

- Strategy: Utilize strategies in health promotion, education and health communication to





increase AD awareness in PR.

- Objective 4.1: Ensure at least one annual AD educational activity directed to relatives, caregivers and or volunteers.
- Objective 4.2: Ensure at least 10 annual awareness activities focused on the general public.
- Objective 4.3: Engage in at least one collaborative agreement with the academia to promote the integration of AD subjects in their curriculum.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

Goal 5: Increase access to early diagnosis and treatment in Puerto Rico.

- Strategy: Train health professionals in early AD diagnosis and on pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments.
 - Objective 5.1: Conduct a study of needs, to identify possible barriers to access to early diagnosis and to pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies.
 - Objective 5.2: Train at least 300 health services providers on the importance of early diagnosis and how to detect Alzheimer's, and on pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies.

Long-Term Care Services:

Goal 6: Increase awareness about the needs of people living with AD requiring long-term care.

- Strategy: Promote awareness among decision makers about the needs of people living with AD, who require long-term care, by means of education and health communication.
 - Objective 6.1: Increase inclusion of the needs of people living with AD in legislation and public policy, related to long-term care centers.
 - Objective 6.2: Increase the amount of long-term care centers observing intervention protocols directed at people living with AD.

Financing Long-Term Care:

Goal 7: Increase access to long term-care services.

- Strategy: Promote awareness within decision makers about needs of people living with AD who require long-term care, by means of education and health communication.
 - Objective 7.1: Increase the availability of long-term care insurance coverage.
 - Objective 7.2: Decrease the economic burden to families with a person with AD in long-term care centers, through tax incentives.

