August 2021

New State-Specific Resources Available

2019 Caregiving Data Fact Sheets: State-specific fact sheets on caregiving data from the 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System surveys are now available for the following states: Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Virginia. For assistance on how to use this data in your state to address dementia caregiving, please contact John Shean at jshean@alz.org.

2019 Subjective Cognitive Decline Infographics: The CDC recently published infographics on subjective cognitive decline for states that collected the data in their 2019 BRFSS surveys. Infographics are available for the District of Columbia and the following states: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

New BOLD Public Health Program Grants Awarded

Seven new public health agencies have been awarded grants under the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Act. Award recipients are the City of Boston Public Health Department, and the Departments of Health in Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Louisiana, South Carolina and Tennessee. These seven join 16 agencies that were awarded BOLD program grants in 2020. The newly funded health departments will promote a public health approach to Alzheimer’s and dementia, focus on developing and enhancing Alzheimer’s strategic plans, and build capacity to address the Alzheimer’s crisis.
Alzheimer's Association International Conference 2021 Highlights

Last month, the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC) 2021 was held in Denver, Colorado and virtually. The conference featured the latest research in Alzheimer’s and dementia, risk reduction, treatment and support. Highlights from AAIC 2021 that are relevant to public health professionals include:

Improving air quality may improve cognitive function and reduce dementia risk. While previous studies linked long-term exposure to air pollution with Alzheimer’s-related brain changes, this is the first accumulated evidence that reducing pollution, especially fine particulates in the air and pollutants from the burning of fuel, is associated with a lower risk of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. Among the findings was that a reduction of fine particulate matter and traffic-related pollutants over 10 years was associated with a 26 percent reduction in cognitive decline and a 14 percent reduction in dementia risk in U.S. women. Another study found that long-term exposure to air pollutants was associated with higher beta amyloid levels in the blood, showing a possible biological connection between air quality and physical brain changes that define Alzheimer’s disease.

Transgender and nonbinary adults in the United States are more likely to report worsening memory and thinking, functional limitations and depression compared with cisgender adults, according to two analyses of BRFSS data. Transgender adults were nearly twice as likely to report subjective cognitive decline (SCD) and more than twice as likely to report functional limitations associated with the worsening memory problems.

Associations exist between COVID-19 and persistent cognitive deficits, including the acceleration of Alzheimer’s disease pathology and symptoms. COVID-related research has also found that biological markers of brain injury, neuroinflammation and Alzheimer’s correlate strongly with the presence of neurological symptoms in COVID-19 patients. And, individuals experiencing cognitive decline post-COVID-19 infection were more likely to have low blood oxygen following brief physical activity as well as poor overall physical condition compared with COVID-19 patients who did not experience cognitive decline.
Healthy Aging Through the Social Determinants of Health — a new book from the American Public Health Association Press — examines the link between social determinants of health and the process of healthy aging. The chapter “Aging and Dementia” explores the public health approach to dementia and cognitive health, provides an overview of the Healthy Brain Initiative State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia: The 2018-2023 Road Map, and features examples of public health action on Alzheimer’s.

Upcoming Events
Trust for America’s Health and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are hosting the virtual 2021 Healthy Aging Symposium on Wednesday, September 8 and Thursday, September 9 in observance of Healthy Aging Month. National researchers, state and local health officials, and policymakers will discuss their work and insights. Attendees will learn about the latest science, best practices, and innovative interventions to improve the health of older Americans.

The National Alzheimer’s and Dementia Resource Center will host a webinar on Tuesday, September 14 at 1:00 p.m. ET. Presenters will provide an overview of the different types of services and trainings provided by community-based programs. Attendees will also hear about methods for sustaining successful program activities.

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