



## Alzheimer's Public Health News

March 2021

### People Living with Dementia are Twice as Likely to Get COVID-19

In the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with dementia were twice as likely to get COVID-19 than individuals without dementia, according to recent [research](#). Additionally, they were more likely to have severe complications from COVID-19. From February-August 2020, COVID patients with dementia were 2.5 times more likely to be hospitalized and 4.4 times more likely to have died from the disease than COVID patients without dementia.

The study also underscored the differential impact COVID-19 has had on Black Americans. Black people living with dementia were nearly three times as likely to develop COVID-19 compared with white people living with dementia, even after adjusting for demographics and COVID-19 risk factors. They were also 36 percent more likely to be hospitalized during the first six months of the pandemic.

### Impact on Older Adults and Caregivers

Older adults are feeling more isolated, have challenges using technology like video conferencing, and report more difficulty getting basic household items since the COVID-19 pandemic began, according to a [study conducted by the NORC at the University of Chicago](#). The study also found that caregivers delayed their own medical appointments, routine medical visits, and preventive care. Caregivers also expressed a need for more respite care and other types of assistance.

### Alzheimer's Public Health Curriculum



A free, flexible curricular resource introduces Alzheimer's as a public health issue.

### The HBI Road Map



Designed for state and local public health practitioners, the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map encourages 25 actions that help promote brain health, address cognitive impairment, and support the needs of caregivers.

### Road Map for Indian Country

## State and Local Health Department Resources

### [Resource Tool for Community Health Workers](#)

Most states and communities have a growing population of older adults who are aging in place. As a result, public health departments are expanding their efforts to improve the health and well-being of older Americans. One strategy is to partner with community health workers (CHWs). [Community Health Workers: A Resource for Healthy Aging and Dementia](#) explores how CHWs can promote healthy aging and help address some of the challenges related to Alzheimer's and other dementia. Created by the Alzheimer's Association and the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#), the guide offers descriptive lists of available CHW trainings, CHW-led interventions, and tools CHWs can use.



Designed for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, the Healthy Brain Initiative *Road Map for Indian Country* is a guide for AI/AN leaders to learn about Alzheimer's and begin planning their response to dementia.

### [National Minority Health Month: Race, Ethnicity and Alzheimer's in America](#)

April is [National Minority Health Month](#) and public health professionals can use this opportunity to raise awareness about health disparities and equity concerns among those living with dementia. [Race, Ethnicity and Alzheimer's in America](#) — the special report from the Alzheimer's Association *2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* — examines the perspectives and experiences of Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native and White Americans with regard to Alzheimer's and dementia care. It also explores the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. View an [infographic](#) and read the full report at [alz.org/facts](#).



Learn about the public health approach to Alzheimer's with topic-specific primers, examples, and resources at [alz.org/publichealth](#)

### Contact

For more information on the Healthy Brain Initiative, public health priorities, or Alzheimer's disease in general, contact [Molly French](#) or check out [alz.org/publichealth](#).

### [Healthy Aging and Public Health Department Accreditation](#)

Public health departments can integrate healthy aging into assessments, planning, and initiatives to strengthen community infrastructure and enhance the health and well-being of older adults. The [Public Health Accreditation Board](#) has developed a [tip sheet](#) and [summary report](#) on foundational strategies for integrating healthy aging efforts throughout the accreditation process.

### [Performance Measures Matrix](#)

A wide array of measures that public health can use to gauge performance on dementia risk reduction, prevention, and detection are now available in a new [matrix tool](#). These measures can be used, for example, when setting program or plan objectives, or in support of evaluation and performance improvement. All of the measures in the matrix tool relate to actions in the [Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map](#).

### [Challenges Faced by Caregivers](#)

A new [report](#) published by the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#) examines the evidence base for essential care and caregiving interventions for the millions of people living with dementia and their caregivers. The report includes recommendations for government

agencies to advance research and implement interventions for populations and communities affected by dementia.

The [National Institute on Aging](#) and the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#) also collaborated on the report.

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### **Career Opportunity: Interdisciplinary Summer Research Institute 2021**

The [Alzheimer's Association® Interdisciplinary Summer Research Institute \(AA-ISRI\)](#) is an immersive, no-cost opportunity for early-career researchers in public health and psychosocial care to become engaged in dementia science and accelerate breakthroughs in the field. Twelve individuals in each field will be selected to participate in the Institute, which will be held in Chicago (COVID-19 circumstances permitting), August 9-13, 2021. Public health researchers will hear from experts with diverse perspectives on the public health aspects of dementia. Participants will also receive individual mentoring in the development of their research proposals.

Applications are due **April 8, 2021**. Individuals from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. **To learn more and submit an application, visit [alz.org/summerinstitute](http://alz.org/summerinstitute).**

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### **Emerging Evidence**

#### *Subjective Cognitive Decline and Physical Activity*

The prevalence of subjective cognitive decline (SCD) — self-reported confusion or memory loss that occurs more frequently or worsens over time — increases as physical activity decreases, according to a new [study](#). Using data from the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\)](#), the study also found the prevalence of functional limitations among those with SCD increases as physical activity levels decrease.

#### *Actualizing Better Health and Health Care for Older Adults*

A recent [article](#) in *Health Affairs* identifies six areas of focus to improve the care and quality of life for all older Americans through the public health, health care and other community sectors. Recommendations of particular interest in improving Alzheimer's and dementia care include allocating resources to palliative and end-of-life care, creating an adequately trained workforce, and strengthening the role of public health.

#### *Creating a Culture of Healthy Aging in Public Health*

COVID-19 has profoundly affected older populations and has drawn attention to societal inequities. A new [commentary](#) from the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#) provides specific approaches public health officials and departments can take to develop a culture of healthy aging in all communities. Public health leaders are encouraged to work with agencies serving older adults to integrate aging into public health plans. Examples include [state Alzheimer's](#)

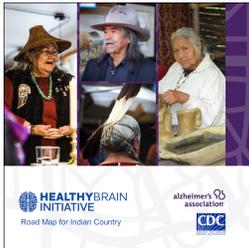
disease plans and plans to implement the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map series.

## Healthy Brain Initiative



The Healthy Brain Initiative's (HBI) *State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia: The 2018-2023 Road Map* is designed to mobilize the public health community in mitigating the future impacts of Alzheimer's and other

dementias, especially among vulnerable populations. Read the [full Road Map](#), [executive summary](#) or get started with the [planning guide](#).



The Healthy Brain Initiative's *Road Map for Indian Country* is a guide for American Indian and Alaska Native leaders to learn about dementia, educate their communities, and start taking action against Alzheimer's.

Read the [full Road Map](#), [executive summary](#), or the [dissemination guide](#) to get started.

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The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead 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. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®.

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