



# Alzheimer's Public Health News

May 2020

## COVID-19 and Dementia

Public health agencies around the country are fully mobilized in the response to COVID-19. In three, 30-minute webcasts, learn why specialized public health action is needed to protect one of our most vulnerable populations: people living with dementia. Each webcast introduces dementia-specific challenges of COVID-19 and offers distinct public health action for the following settings:

- [Homes and in the Community](#)
- [Emergency Departments and Hospitals](#)
- [Long-Term Care Facilities](#)

These webinars feature expert speakers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Alzheimer's Association. Find downloadable tip sheets, additional information, related facts, and resources to guide the public health response at [alz.org/publichealth-covid19](http://alz.org/publichealth-covid19). This site will be updated as more information and resources become available for the public health field. Stay up-to-date with other professional and consumer guidance from the Alzheimer's Association at [alz.org/covid19help](http://alz.org/covid19help).

The CDC has also launched a COVID-19 microsite about and for older adults. At [cdc.gov/aging/covid19](http://cdc.gov/aging/covid19), find information about risk, face coverings, managing stress and anxiety, guidance for long-term care facilities, and other resources including new guidance for [memory care units](#) in long-term care facilities. The full CDC library on COVID-19 is at [cdc.gov/covid19](http://cdc.gov/covid19).

## HBI Resources

- High blood pressure is a risk factor for cognitive decline, and many public health agencies have existing services, campaigns and infrastructure to lower incidence of hypertension. An [executive summary](#) is now available for the action brief — [Protecting the Heart and the Brain: Managing Hypertension to Reduce the Risk of Cognitive Decline](#). The public health community can use these materials to reduce the risk of cognitive decline in populations through the prevention and management of hypertension. June — [Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month](#) — is a perfect time to start.

## 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



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.

- A new, [online learning module](#) helps support public health agencies in identifying priorities and taking action to improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Developed by the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials \(ASTHO\)](#), the module aligns with both Healthy Brain Initiative Road Maps — for [state and local public health agencies](#) and for [Indian Country](#). Users of the module will build familiarity with the HBI Road Maps, learn about public health actions that address dementia and caregiving, and identify resources that support implementation of the HBI Road Map actions.
- A majority of individuals reporting subjective cognitive decline (SCD) — that is, a self-reported increase in memory loss or confusion — also report at least one other chronic condition. A [new brief](#) from CDC and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) calls on public health to improve the health and well-being of people experiencing both memory loss and chronic health conditions.
- In case you missed last month's webinar — Overview of a Ready-to-Use Curriculum: A Public Health Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementias — you can now view the [recording](#). Co-hosted by the Alzheimer's Association and the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), the webinar provides an introduction to [A Public Health Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementias](#), a free, flexible curriculum that makes it easy to introduce Alzheimer's to undergraduate and graduate students in public health and related disciplines.

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

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## Emerging Evidence - Hypertension

- Nearly half of Americans (45.4%) aged 18 and older had high blood pressure in 2017-2018, according to a [new analysis](#) of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). According to the analysis, hypertension prevalence increases with age, with nearly 75% of those aged 60 and older reporting high blood pressure. Among racial/ethnic groups, black adults have the highest hypertension prevalence (57.1%).
- Additionally, a separate, new [meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials](#) found that lowering blood pressure with anti-hypertensive medications reduces the risk of developing dementia by 7%.
- Addressing hypertension is an increasingly vital way to promote heart-brain health. Public health can use this [action brief](#) and [executive summary](#) to help populations manage hypertension and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

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## Other Emerging Evidence

- Today, more younger adults — those aged 18-49 — care for a person living with Alzheimer’s or dementia than in 2015, according to [Caregiving in the United States 2020](#), a new report from the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP. The report also found that one in three caregivers of someone aged 65 or older reports the presence of Alzheimer’s or dementia, and it includes additional data about dementia caregivers.
- Fewer than half of people with dementia reported being told of their diagnosis by a physician, according to an [analysis](#) of data from the [Health and Retirement Study](#) (HRS). Compared to their white peers, higher proportions of black and Hispanic individuals with dementia may be unaware of their diagnosis, despite higher dementia prevalence among these groups.
- To be most effective, public health messaging developed for Latino populations about the need for early detection and diagnosis of dementia must target cultural values, present balanced visuals, include racially and ethnically diverse images, and include whole families according to [recent research](#) from the [Healthy Brain Research Network](#) (HBRN).
- Many brief cognitive tests can correctly distinguish between Alzheimer’s dementia and normal cognition, according to an [evidence review](#) from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Brief cognitive tests may help increase early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer’s.
- Approximately one-fourth of older adults who live in the community are socially isolated, according to [Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System](#) a new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Some studies have suggested that social isolation may increase risk of dementia among older adults.

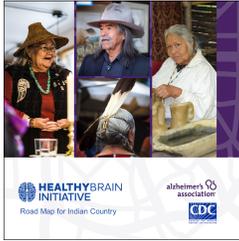
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## Healthy Brain Initiative



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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