



October 2020

APHA Adopts Policy Statement to Strengthen Alzheimer's Public Health Response

This past weekend, the American Public Health Association (APHA) — the largest professional association of public health practitioners in the United States — adopted a policy statement designed to strengthen the public health response to Alzheimer's, dementia and cognitive health. This is the first-ever APHA policy statement focused on dementia. Ten recommendations in the policy statement provide actions for policymakers and leaders in the private sector to better prepare the nation's workforce to adequately, competently, and compassionately care for people living with dementia.

The policy statement — *Strengthening the Dementia Care Workforce: A Public Health Priority* — outlines the increasing public health burden of dementia, the disproportionate impact on some communities, and workforce challenges that impede appropriate care for people living with dementia. In response to the growing need for a dementia-capable workforce, the statement calls for investment in health and social care for people with dementia, including:

- Adoption of clear standards and action steps for hiring, training and retaining an adequately sized and skilled workforce in the health care, public health, and long-term care sectors;
- Improved public financing of community-based services; and
- Rigorous public monitoring of quality to support improvement in the provision of care across the care continuum.

Policy statements help shape the general position that APHA takes on public health issues. APHA itself and public health practitioners in general use these statements as resources to guide legislative, regulatory, and media advocacy activities. This new policy statement will better ensure robust public health action to address Alzheimer's and all dementia.

The policy statement was developed by an interdisciplinary committee of APHA members and adopted as part of the [APHA 2020 Annual Meeting and Expo](#). The full statement will be added to the APHA [policy statement database](#) in early 2021, but an official summary is available in the [APHA press release](#).

The Alzheimer's Public Health E-News is supported (in part) by Cooperative Agreement #NU58DP006744-01, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.

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