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Alzheimer's advice as near as a phone, computer for rural Coloradans

Nearly 70 percent of U.S. residents live in the mere three percent of our country defined as "urban." That leaves 88 million people* spread across the remaining 97 percent considered "rural America."

While living in rural America certainly has its appeals, access to healthcare is not among them. There are 58 percent fewer general practice physicians and 89 percent fewer specialists per capita in rural communities. And, for older Americans who are more susceptible to developing Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, the segment of the population age 65 and older reaches 50 percent in rural areas.

"There clearly is a challenge in meeting the day-to-day healthcare needs of people across rural America," said Amelia Schafer, executive director of the Colorado Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. "And for the people we serve, the options for specialized care can be quite limited."

Ensuring that all families have the opportunity to receive education, advice and counsel related to dementia, the Alzheimer's Association has developed a comprehensive program of services designed for ease of access for families that cannot visit one of the network of eight offices around Colorado (Boulder, Colorado Springs, Denver, Durango, Fort Collins Grand Junction, Greeley and Pueblo), or whose caregiving responsibilities keep them close to home.

"We understand that caregivers can be 'on call' with their loved ones up to 24 hours a day," said Schafer. "Often it's not convenient to leave the home to attend a class or consult with one of our staff members. For that reason, we have created a full range of services that can be accessed by computer or telephone from the privacy of your home."

Explore services from your home

The Alzheimer's Association has a broad menu of remote-access services. An index of online tools is located [here](#). Those include:

- **[Support groups](#)**: Through ALZConnected®, you can join a free online community open to anyone affected by Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. The community includes people living with the disease, caregivers, family members, friends and individuals who have lost someone to dementia. Participants particularly value the message boards where they can post questions and hear back from a range of individuals who have experience with similar situations.
- **[Online classes](#)**: While attending Alzheimer's Association educational classes with others offers opportunities for shared experiences and exchange of ideas, sometimes caregiving schedules don't allow for it. The Association offers a broad range of free, online classes that participants can take when their schedule permits. Among the class offerings are:

- Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia
 - 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s
 - Challenging Conversations about Dementia
 - Effective Communication Strategies
 - Healthy Living for your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research
 - Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer’s Disease
 - Living with Alzheimer’s: For People with Alzheimer’s
- [Clinical trials](#): Not all clinical trials require in-person participation. Some of the programs for healthy volunteers are online and email questionnaires and surveys. Learn more about the free TrialMatch clinical studies matching service.
 - [Library](#): The Alzheimer’s Association Green-Field Library is the nation’s oldest and foremost library and resource center devoted to increasing knowledge about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Much of the information is accessible online and can be easily downloaded.
 - [Care planning](#): Caregivers quickly learn that Alzheimer’s disease requires a lot of planning to both understand this progressive condition as well as the ongoing needs for legal and financial planning, safety considerations, caregiver support and more.
 - Helpline: Another free and extremely convenient service of the Alzheimer’s Association is the 24/7 Helpline (800-272-3900). The Helpline is staffed around the clock by trained professional counselors who can help callers deal with situations in the home, direct callers to resources in their community, and guide caregivers who are unable to find time out of the home to valuable online programs and services. And the Helpline staff has access to translation services for more than 200 languages and dialects.

**according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 31% of the U.S. population lived in areas of the country with 2,500 or fewer people*

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Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association Colorado Chapter is the premier source of information and support for the more than 73,000 Coloradans with Alzheimer’s disease, their families and caregivers. Through its statewide network of offices, the Alzheimer’s Association offers education, counseling, support groups and a 24-hour Helpline at no charge to families. In addition, contributions help fund advancements in research to prevent, treat and eventually conquer this disease. The Alzheimer’s Association advocates for those living with Alzheimer’s and their families on related legislative issues, and with health and long-term care providers. For information call the Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 bilingual Helpline at 800-272-3900, or visit www.alz.org/co.