Alzheimer’s and other dementias are an urgent public health issue.

- More than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer’s.
- It is one of the most expensive diseases in America; costs will total $355 billion in 2021.
- And the burden is growing larger. The number of people living with Alzheimer’s is projected to more than double to 12.8 million in 2050, and the costs are expected to rise to more than $1.1 trillion.

There are several ways that the public health community can address the crisis.

- Primary Prevention: A growing scientific consensus has concluded that healthy living can reduce the risk of cognitive decline and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s. Public health can integrate brain health messages into existing, relevant public health campaigns.
- Early Detection and Diagnosis: As many as half of people living with Alzheimer’s have not been diagnosed. Public health can undertake public awareness campaigns to promote early detection and diagnosis and can educate medical professionals about assessment tools.
- Data Collection: States can collect data on cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s caregiving using tools such as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).
- Access to Care and Services: Public health can encourage health professionals to follow evidence-based clinical care guidelines, create tools to aid in the delivery of care, and report on quality care dementia practices.

The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Act (P.L. 115-406) establishes a public health infrastructure to address dementia.

- In 2018, the bipartisan BOLD Act was unanimously approved by the Senate and passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 361-3.
- With initial congressional funding, the CDC is:
  - Funding three Alzheimer’s Centers of Excellence to expand and promote innovative and effective Alzheimer’s interventions.
  - Providing grants to 16 state, local, and tribal public health departments to implement interventions, including those in the Public Health Road Map.
  - Increasing the analysis and timely reporting of data on cognitive decline and caregiving to inform future public health actions.

Congress must continue its commitment to addressing this public health crisis by fully funding the BOLD Act.

- The BOLD Act authorized $100 million over five years to carry out various public health activities addressing Alzheimer’s and other dementias.
- For fiscal year 2021, Congress provided $15 million to implement the BOLD Act. Now, Congress must fully fund the law by providing $20 million in fiscal year 2022 for the CDC.
- Fully funding the BOLD Act will enable CDC to award additional Centers of Excellence, focus on important priorities such as Tribal Health, and expand the number of state, local, and tribal public health departments that receive grants.