

FACTSHEET

SEPTEMBER 2021

alzimpact.org

COVID-19 and Individuals with Alzheimer's

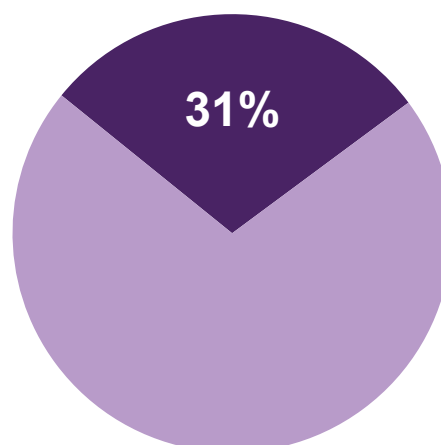
The COVID-19 pandemic creates unique and pressing challenges for long-term care (LTC) communities and residents.

- There are over 15,000 nursing homes and more than 28,000 assisted living communities in the United States.
- Individuals living in these care communities are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 due to the community nature of these settings.
- The large majority of residents are older with underlying chronic conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19.
- As of June 1, 2021, 31% of reported COVID-19 deaths in the United States — more than 184,000 — were among workers and residents of nursing homes and other LTC communities.

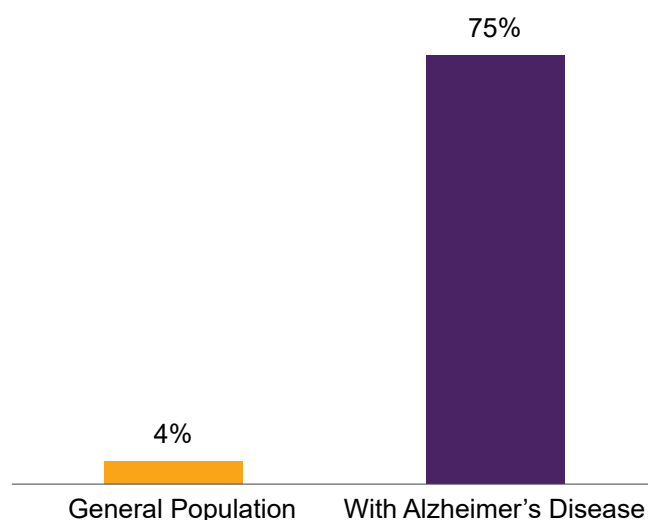
People living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias represent a large proportion of LTC residents.

- At age 80, approximately 75% of people living with Alzheimer's live in a nursing home, compared with only 4% of the general population.
- Nearly half (48%) of nursing home residents have dementia, including 59% of long stay (100 days or longer) residents.
- Among individuals in all residential care communities, including assisted living facilities, 42% have Alzheimer's or other dementias.

Percent of COVID-19 Related Deaths Occurring in LTC Facilities As of June 1, 2021



Percent of People Who Live in a Nursing Home at Age 80



Individuals living with Alzheimer's have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

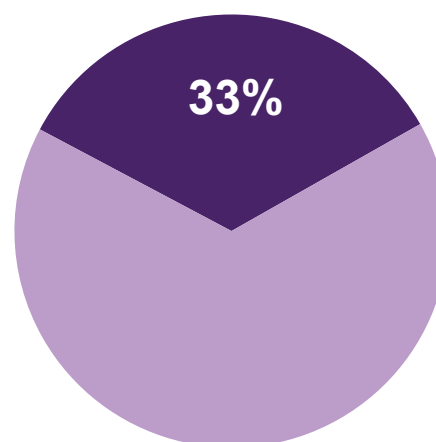
- Medicare beneficiaries diagnosed with Alzheimer's are more likely to contract COVID-19 and more likely to die from it, even after controlling for living arrangements, chronic conditions, and demographic factors.
- During the first 6 months of the pandemic, 8.8% of Medicare beneficiaries with dementia were diagnosed with COVID-19, compared with 2.4% of all Medicare beneficiaries.
- Through April 2021, there were 725,160 COVID-19 hospitalizations among Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiaries. Nearly one-third of them had a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia.
- From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic through the end of 2020, there were approximately 42,000 more Alzheimer's and dementia deaths than the previous five-year average.

Alzheimer's Association COVID-19 Long-Term Care Policy Recommendations

To best support individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia during the pandemic, the Alzheimer's Association has released a comprehensive set of long-term care policy recommendations for federal and state lawmakers.

These recommendations focus on four areas: (1) testing, (2) reporting, (3) surge activation, and (4) providing support. They are designed to create a strong and decisive response to the COVID-19 crisis in all long-term care settings. It is critical that policy makers and long-term care providers act urgently to protect the most vulnerable among us. To view these recommendations, please visit alz.org/policy-covid19.

Percent of Medicare FFS COVID-19 Hospitalizations with a Dementia Diagnosis Through 4/24/2021



In addition, COVID-19 poses unique challenges for people with dementia and their families.

- Caregivers may receive less or irregular outside assistance, adding to already-high levels of caregiver strain.
- Persons living with dementia may have an impaired ability to follow or remember instructions on social distancing and other best practices, thus increasing their risk of contracting COVID-19.
- People living with dementia may have difficulty adapting to disrupted routines. Wandering, confusion, and disorientation may increase.
- Cognitive impairment may impede communicating, especially virtually, therefore contributing to social isolation and potentially causing more rapid cognitive decline.
- Neglect, abuse, and exploitation may not be detected early if surveyors and adult protective services (APS) workers are not able to safely access long-term care communities.