

Advance Risk Reduction, Early Detection and Diagnosis



Today more than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, but as many as half of them are not diagnosed. And, with two-thirds of Americans having at least one major potential risk factor for dementia, our nation faces a critical need for effective dementia risk reduction strategies that help all communities. An early and accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer's can improve access to care and support services, enhance quality of life and reduce the financial impact of the disease.



Expand access to resources in diverse and underserved communities to reduce stigma and increase early detection and diagnosis of dementia.

Older Black Americans are about twice as likely and older Hispanics are about one and one-half times as likely to have Alzheimer's or another dementia as older White Americans.

- » Fund an Alzheimer's public health campaign to educate the public with a focus on:
 - populations with a high prevalence of Alzheimer's and other dementias;
 - populations with a higher prevalence of cardiovascular or traumatic brain injury risk factors;
 - access to services in diverse and underserved communities; and
 - raising awareness in communities about the early signs of cognitive impairment, the value of early detection and diagnosis, and discussing changes in memory and thinking with health care professionals.
- » Require local health promotion programs to educate minority and underserved populations on:
 - the early signs of cognitive impairment;
 - the value of early detection and diagnosis; and
 - discussing changes in memory and thinking with health care professionals.



Incentivize and advance dementia risk reduction across provider and community settings.

A growing body of evidence shows that addressing certain modifiable risk factors and promoting healthy behaviors can reduce the risk of cognitive decline, possibly reduce the risk of dementia, and protect cognitive health.

- » Ensure health departments incorporate dementia risk reduction into existing public health programs.
- » Designate the state health department to oversee the Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map implementation efforts related to reducing risk for cognitive decline and dementia.



Incentivize care planning for individuals and families living with dementia.

Early intervention offers the best opportunity for better outcomes for people living with dementia, as it can allow individuals more time to plan for the future, adopt lifestyle changes, participate in clinical trials, and to live more fully with a higher quality of life for as long as possible.

- » Integrate the following into the health department provided education for health care workers:
 - the early warning signs of dementia;
 - ways to encourage discussions with health care professionals;
 - the Medicare care planning code; and
 - the benefits of early detection and diagnosis.
- » Create a Medicaid billing code for diagnosis and care planning.