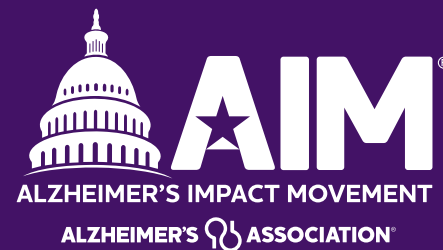


# Increase Access to Dementia Care, Support and Treatment



Receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other dementia can be devastating and overwhelming. Families are facing a fatal disease, and are ill-equipped with a health care system that lacks the infrastructure to deliver the care and support they need. State governments must act to ensure individuals living with dementia and their caregivers have access to essential resources and treatments at all stages of the disease.



### **Utilize Medicaid and other state programs to reduce health care barriers and increase access to residential and home and community-based services.**

The costs of health care and long-term care for individuals living with Alzheimer's or other dementia are massive, with dementia being one of the costliest conditions to society. With Medicare not covering long-term care, few individuals living with dementia have sufficient resources to cover the cost of their care.

- » Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for residential settings and home and community-based services (HCBS) that serve the unique needs of individuals living with dementia.
- » Expand Medicaid financial eligibility standards for HCBS and long-term care services.
- » Adjust Medicaid eligibility requirements for HCBS and long-term care services to consider the needs related to cognition.
- » Provide Medicaid coverage and other state funded coverage for dementia-competent HCBS, including: personal care, respite care, care coordination, adult daycare, assisted living, medication management, chore and/or companion care and personal emergency response services.



### **Establish or strengthen programs that provide support to family dementia caregivers.**

Eighty-three percent of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends or other unpaid caregivers. Alzheimer's takes a devastating toll on these caregivers. Compared with caregivers of people without dementia, twice as many caregivers of those with dementia indicate substantial emotional, financial and physical difficulties.

- » Establish statewide measures such as pre-crisis plans, mobile crisis units, dementia behavioral specialists, dementia-specific crisis stabilization units, and post-crisis follow-up care.
- » Require dementia-specific training for all first responders including law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical technicians.
- » Require dementia-specific training for Adult Protective Services, Long-Term Care Ombudsmen and Medicaid functional screening staff.



## **Ensure state Medicaid programs provide appropriate coverage to approved treatments for Alzheimer's.**

Alzheimer's and other dementia pose significant challenges and costs to families and the health care system. As research continues, FDA-approved treatments may benefit individuals and reduce health care expenditures.

- » Ensure Medicaid coverage of treatments is aligned with the clinical standards established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for all approved treatments for Alzheimer's.



## **Create and implement a statewide crisis response system to support the unique needs of individuals living with dementia.**

People living with Alzheimer's and other dementia have unique needs that often make care delivery and communication more challenging. Without proper training to recognize the signs and effectively communicate with people living with dementia, situations may escalate quickly with potentially dangerous consequences.

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## **Strengthen the health care workforce for all levels of dementia care.**

As the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease increases, so does the need for additional members of the workforce who are involved in diagnosing, treating and caring for those living with the disease. The demand for direct care workers (roles such as certified nursing assistants and home health aides) is projected to grow by more than 40% between 2016 and 2026, while their availability is expected to decline.

- » Create career pathways and secure financial incentives, including loan forgiveness programs and grant programs, to recruit and retain direct care workers with a focus on dementia.
- » Require compensation and benefits for direct care workers that is competitive, based on data from other employment opportunities available.
- » Secure financial incentives to recruit health care providers with geriatric, neurological, and dementia-specific training.
- » Ensure the needs of individuals living with dementia are addressed in policy initiatives that create or direct a workforce commission, council, taskforce, workgroup or study.
- » Establish a workgroup for cross-sector collaboration that connects state agencies with employers and training programs to identify priorities and coordinate direct care workforce development solutions.