



Brain Health Equity Nurse Fellowship



USAGAINSTALZHEIMER'S CENTER *for*
BRAIN HEALTH EQUITY

OUR VISION

Empower nurses with the knowledge and public health leadership skills needed to promote brain health in communities with a high risk for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD).

What is Brain Health? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), brain health refers to the ability to draw on the strengths of the brain to remember, learn, play, concentrate, and maintain a clear, active mind.

The UsAgainstAlzheimer's (UsA2) Center for Brain Health Equity (the Center), supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Healthy Brain Initiative, designed the Brain Health Equity Nurse Fellowship to address disparities in knowledge, access, diagnosis and treatment among African American and Latino people. We believe investing in nurse education and leadership can help promote brain health and advance health equity among historically marginalized communities.

We developed the Fellowship in partnership with the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) and the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) and an interdisciplinary network of subject matter experts.



NBNA's mission is to provide a forum for collective action by African American nurses to represent and provide a forum for black nurses to advocate for and implement strategies to ensure access to the highest quality of healthcare for persons of color. Learn more [here](#).

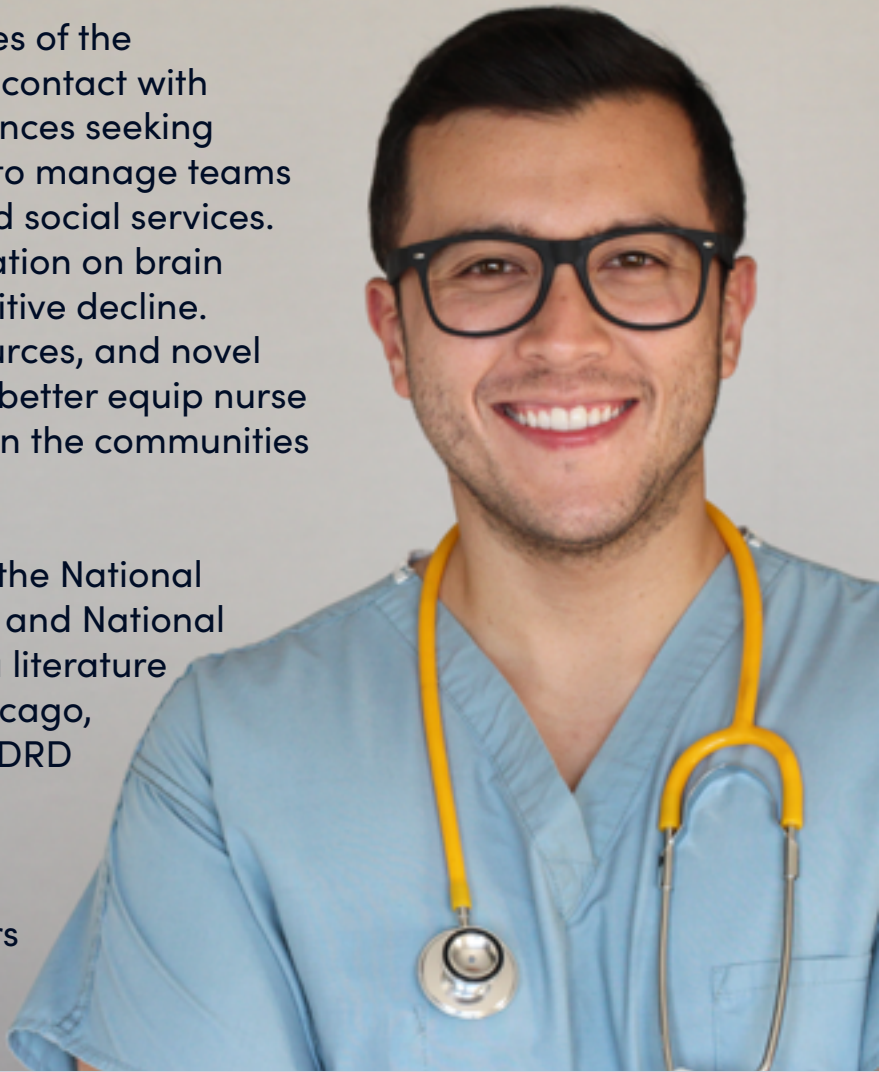


NAHN is committed to advancing the health in Hispanic communities and to lead, promote and advocate the educational, professional, and leadership opportunities for Hispanic nurses. Learn more [here](#).

The Need Among Nurses

Nurse professionals are on the frontlines of the healthcare system and are in frequent contact with people of all backgrounds and experiences seeking care. This workforce is well positioned to manage teams and link clinical care, public health, and social services. However, nurses need credible information on brain health and ways to reduce risk of cognitive decline. Tailored brain health knowledge, resources, and novel educational strategies are required to better equip nurse professionals to promote brain health in the communities they serve.

Through focus groups conducted with the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) and National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) and a literature review with the University of Illinois Chicago, we identified knowledge gaps about ADRD and brain health among nurses. These insights, along with data generated by a survey of nurses conducted in partnership with the Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, identified the following gaps:



Low levels of knowledge about the signs and symptoms of ADRD.

- From our sampling of women's health nurse practitioners, (n≈1,000) 45% of nurse practitioners report a lack of familiarity with the signs and symptoms of dementia; however, 54% said that they want better knowledge in this area.
- Nurses frequently noted that they did not receive robust ADRD education during their basic nursing training, such as learning about the connection between preventing or managing chronic disease and brain health.

Low levels of knowledge about the relationship between healthy behaviors, such as diet and exercise, and brain health.

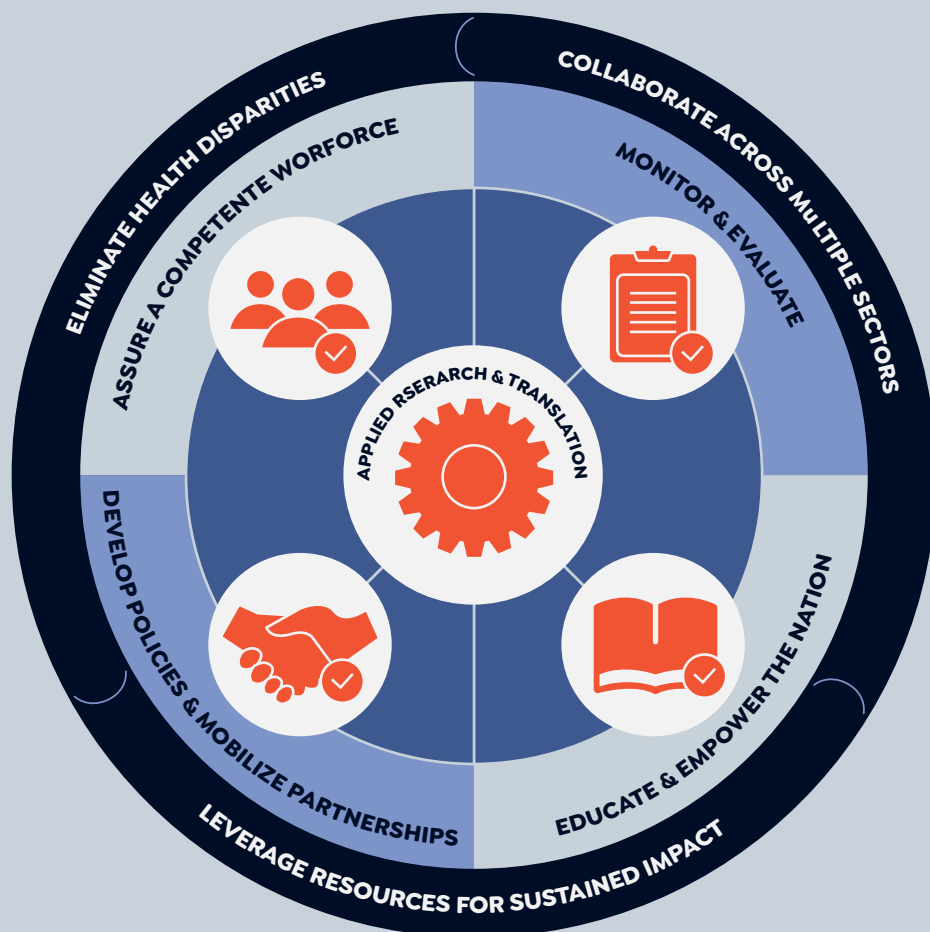
- From our sampling of women's health nurse practitioners, nearly 84% of nurse practitioners strongly or somewhat agree that they would benefit from additional resources or training in memory and brain health.
- Even if nurses had higher levels of knowledge, they frequently stated they were unsure on how to provide care and information to patients who see Alzheimer's as a normal part of aging and not as a disease.

The Need Among Nurses

Our focus on empowering nurses and building the capacity of our strategic partners the NAHN and NBNA aligns with the CDC's National Healthy Brain Roadmap:

- Educate public health and healthcare professionals on sources of reliable information about brain health and ways to use the information to inform those they serve (HBI Roadmap Action W-1).
- Educate healthcare professionals about the importance of treating co-morbidities, addressing injury risks, and attending to behavioral health needs among people at all stages of dementia (HBI Roadmap Action W-6).
- Educate public health and healthcare professionals on sources of reliable information about brain health and ways to use the information to inform those they serve (HBI Roadmap Action W-1).
- Integrate the best available evidence about brain health and cognitive decline risk factors into existing health communications that promote health and chronic condition management for people across the life span (HBI Roadmap Action E-2).

Conceptual Roadwork for the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map

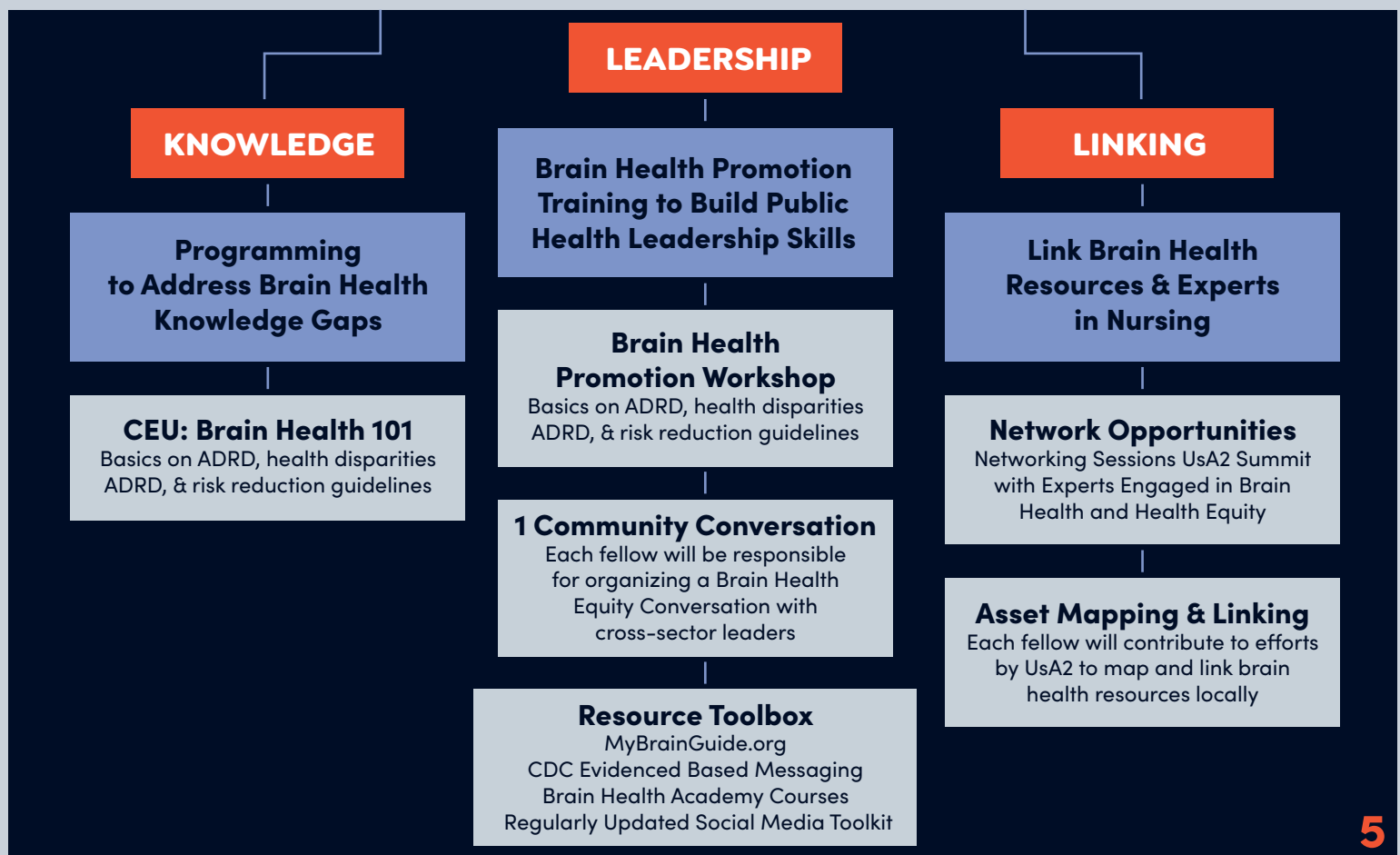


Fellowship Overview

In partnership with subject matter experts, we designed the Fellowship to develop nurse leaders who are motivated and prepared to promote brain health equity by achieving the following objectives:

- 1. Improve Knowledge:** Provide nurses with tailored continuing education ADRD to address brain health knowledge gaps.
- 2. Cultivate Leadership:** Provide nurses with the leadership skills and evidence-based content needed to promote tailored brain health education among their peers and communities locally.
- 3. Facilitate Networking and Linking:** Develop a national network of nurses and experts working at the intersections of brain health, public health, and health equity to create opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and linking of local resources.

BRAIN HEALTH EQUITY NURSE FELLOWSHIP COMPONENTS



Improving Knowledge: Develop Continuing Education Credit Courses to Address Brain Health Knowledge Gaps

In collaboration with NAHN and NBNA, we will develop courses eligible for Continuing Education (CE) credits focused on improving knowledge levels about brain health with a particular focus on the core competencies identified by the CDC's Healthy Brain Roadmap.

In the pilot year, the Center will require Fellows to participate in one workshop with the opportunity to earn more credits through the UsA2 Brain Health Academy:

- **Brain Health 101:** Evidence-based information on ADRD to lay the foundation for what brain health is and how changes within the brain may lead to cognitive aging, cognitive impairment, and ADRD, with an intentional focus on historically marginalized African American and Latino communities.
- **UsA2 Brain Health Academy:** Beyond the Brain Health 101 workshop, Fellows will be invited to participate in additional “deep-dive” learning opportunities through UsA2’s Brain Health Academy, which will include CE courses on topics related to modifiable risk factors for ADRD, like physical activity, sleep, social isolation, nutrition, and hypertension. Each 60 minute “deep dive” session will feature expert speakers, have clear learning objectives, and a downloadable fact sheet/summary take-away.



Cultivating Leadership: Training on Brain Health Promotion to Build Public Health Leadership Skills

We will equip Fellows with the presentation and outreach skills needed to host a “Community Conversation” with local health professionals to promote brain health locally using evidence-based resources. In the pilot year, Fellows will conduct outreach and host at least one community conversation in their community for health professionals in their networks (e.g. other nurses in their chapter):

Peer Learning Expectations: Community Conversations are designed to increase awareness of disparities in Alzheimer’s and other dementias and to offer health professionals access to reliable, evidence-based brain health resources. (see Figure 1)

- Each Fellow will be responsible for:
 - Utilizing a sample curriculum provided by UsA2, present a condensed “Brain Health Equity 101” session virtually or in-person for 20-25 local health professionals.
 - Recruiting 20- 25 local health professionals for the Community Conversation (e.g., members of their professional society, health professionals in their practice or in their communities).

While participants do not need to be nurses, there is a strong preference for nurse outreach and education. Examples of other professionals could include community health workers and health programming staff at local non-profits, etc.

- UsA2 will provide template promotional materials and technology support and support with securing local experts for engagement.
- Fellows will administer digital surveys for participants and ensure survey completion by participants.

The Center will analyze this data to track the impact of the program on increasing brain health knowledge levels and addressing identified gaps.

Cultivating Leadership: Training on Brain Health Promotion to Build Public Health Leadership Skills

Brain Health Promotion: We will provide Fellows with public speaking and presentation skills and will empower Fellows with reliable information on brain health through a regularly updated Resource Toolbox with social media messaging and resources, such as BrainGuide.

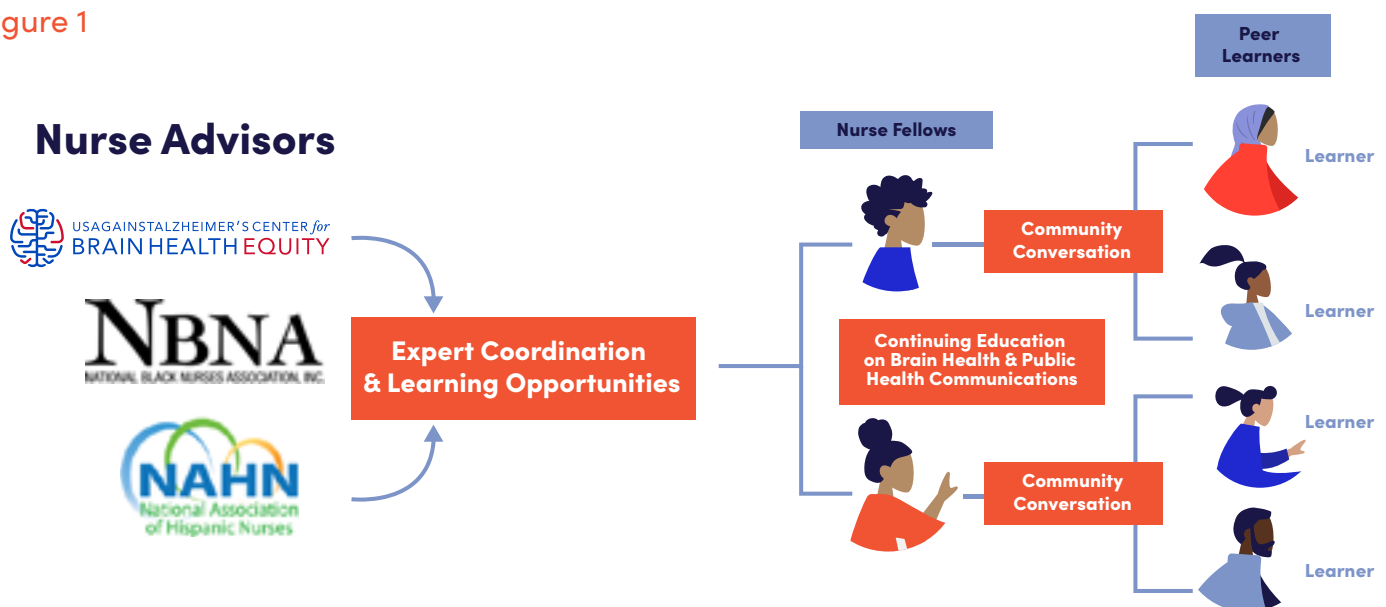
- **About Brain Guide:**

A first-of-its-kind platform that empowers people with knowledge and resources to take the best next steps in managing their own or a loved one's brain health. BrainGuide was developed with input from diverse medical experts and consumers and is available to community members online, over-the-phone, and in English and Spanish. UsAgainstAlzheimer's continues to work with brain health experts to ensure BrainGuide reflects the latest scientific knowledge.

Link Professionals: Develop and Link a National Experts and Resources

We will facilitate networking and information sharing among nurses and other experts working at the intersections of brain health, public health, and health equity. In the pilot year, Fellows will participate in a minimum of one networking event and will contribute to efforts to map brain health resources in their communities.

Figure 1



Acknowledgments

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About UsAgainstAlzheimer's:

UsAgainstAlzheimer's exists to conquer Alzheimer's disease. We take on the toughest problems; bring all of "Us" together to break down barriers; advocate for research that will speed treatments to market; and drive changes that matter most to people living with the disease. We will not rest until brain-span equals lifespan - for everyone.

i. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/2018-2023-Road-Map-508.pdf>

ii. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2021. The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25982>.

iii. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/2018-2023-Road-Map-508.pdf>