The United States Needs a National Alzheimer’s Prevention Goal

The United States should set an ambitious national goal to prevent Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

It is time to replace despair and disappointment with determination and hope. It is time to show there are steps that our nation can take to reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s and dementia, delay onset, and promote brain health. And most importantly, it is time to rally Americans to take action.

Alzheimer’s disease is a public health crisis that is expanding as our nation ages, with a projected increase to nearly 14 million people in the U.S. with the disease by 2050. Communities of color and women bear a disproportionate burden. Without early intervention and treatment, the cumulative care costs are projected to exceed $20 trillion over the next 30 years.

Our nation must do more to change the course of this disease. Emerging science points to the ability to reduce dementia risk and slow the rate of cognitive decline as people age through early detection and non-pharmacological and pharmacological interventions across the lifespan, particularly in midlife and at the earliest pre-dementia stages. Studies indicate more than a third of dementia cases are potentially preventable by addressing risk factors including education, treatment of hypertension, exercise, social engagement, smoking, hearing loss, depression, diabetes, and obesity.

It will take a new national commitment, new partners, new approaches, and new attitudes to get in front of this disease. Cognitive decline is not inevitable. And, while deaths from other major causes such as heart disease have decreased, the number of deaths from Alzheimer’s disease have increased exponentially. As a nation, we must take a new approach to focus not only on curing Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias but preventing it in the first place.

For too long, people living with dementia their families and caregivers have heard of the disappointments of drug trials and the difficulty of finding an Alzheimer’s cure. That must change – now.

Make no mistake, research must continue into promising disease-modifying drug therapies to treat Alzheimer’s and its symptoms for patients in the early stages of dementia. But to truly reduce the number of people impacted by this devastating disease, our nation must build on the concrete research findings showing that public health interventions and lifestyle modifications may prevent or delay the onset of Alzheimer’s and related dementias and disrupt progression of mild cognitive impairment.

A growing number of government organizations and advisory groups are increasingly aligned in the position that it is possible to reduce the risk of dementia, including the World Health Organization, the Lancet Commission, the American Heart Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
There are far-reaching benefits of this effort, as research shows dementia seems to be tightly connected to other chronic conditions. A national prevention strategy to reduce dementia risk offers a unique opportunity to mobilize clinical, policy, and public health efforts to reduce diabetes, hypertension, tobacco use, and depression, particularly among communities of color.

The U.S. should set a national prevention goal that is ambitious and achievable. This goal must include dates to strive for, a roadmap to guide the efforts, metrics to measure progress along the way, and a focus on healthcare equity that recognizes the disproportionate impact of Alzheimer’s and related dementias on communities of color and women. Establishing dementia prevention as a clinical and research priority with measurable, time-bound targets will build on current efforts and drive changes in clinical practice, public health, research and innovation - just as our nation has done for heart disease and other health challenges.

A clear prevention “north star” will benefit families, society, economy and our nation. Preventing or delaying dementia will
  • Reduce financial pressure on the healthcare system and lower costs to public programs such as Medicare and Medicaid,
  • Decrease the cognitive, physical, psychological and economic burdens on those living with symptoms that often last more than a decade and their families,
  • Improve quality of life for individuals of all ages, and
  • Increase the likelihood that adults can thrive and remain independent into their later years.

We call on leaders, organizations, colleagues, and partners in government and the private sector, in public and clinical health, chronic disease prevention, wellness, and health equity to join in this call for the United States to adopt a national, measurable, time-bound impact prevention goal to reduce the number of people with Alzheimer’s and related dementias.

Signatories:

1. AARP
2. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
3. Accelerate Cures/Treatments for All Dementia (ACT-AD)
4. Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE)
5. African American Health Alliance
6. Aging Life Care Association
7. Ageless Grace® Brain Health
8. Alliance for Aging Research
9. Alliance for Patient Access
10. Alzheimer's of Central Alabama
11. Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin
12. Alzheimer’s Disease Discovery Foundation (ADDF)
13. Alzheimer’s Foundation of America
14. Alzheimer’s Los Angeles
15. Alzheimer’s Mississippi
16. Alzheimer’s New Jersey
17. Alzheimer’s Orange County
18. Alzheimer’s San Diego
19. Alzheimer’s Texas
20. Alzheimer’s Therapeutic Research Institute (ATRI), Keck School of Medicine of USC
21. AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care
22. American Academy of Audiology
23. American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
24. American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
25. American College of Preventive Medicine
26. American Federation of Teachers
27. American Geriatrics Society
28. AGS Health in Aging Foundation
29. American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living
30. American Heart Association
31. Rebecca Ailes-Fine, Co-Founder Women Against Alzheimer’s & Co-Founder WISP
32. American Medical Women's Association
33. American Public Health Association
34. American Sleep Apnea Association
35. American Society on Aging (ASA)
36. American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery
37. American Society for Nutrition
38. Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists
39. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
40. Rhoda Au, PhD Professor, Boston University School of Medicine and Public Health
41. Laura Baker, PhD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine – Geriatrics, Neurology, and Social Sciences and Health Policy
42. The Balm in Gilead, Inc.
43. Lisa L. Barnes, PhD, Alla V. and Solomon Jesmer Professor of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine, Rush Alzheimer’s Disease Center
44. Beating Alzheimer’s By Embracing Science (B.A.B.E.S.)
45. Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging
46. Beyond Type 1
47. Biogen
48. Gabrielle H. Blake, LCSW
49. Soo Borson MD, Dementia Care Research and Consulting; Prof Emerita, University of Washington
50. Brain Health Initiative
51. Brain Health Institute
52. Malaz Boustani, MD, Richard M. Fairbanks Professor of Aging Research Indiana University School of Medicine
53. Brazoria County Gathering Place Interfaith Ministries, Inc.
54. Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation
55. Care & Thrive Foundation
56. Celiac Disease Foundation
57. Center for BrainHealth at The University of Texas at Dallas
58. Center for Health Innovation and Implementation Science
59. Ceres Community Project
60. Sandra Bond Chapman, PhD, Center for BrainHealth at The University of Texas at Dallas
61. Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health
62. Coalition for Better Health at Lower Cost
63. Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups
64. Cognitive Dynamics
65. Common Threads
66. Concussion Legacy Foundation
67. James R. Creasey, Founder, CEO, Jiminy Wicket
68. Dr. Krystal L. Culler, DBH, M.A., Founder & Creative Director, Virtual Brain Health Center
69. Jeffrey L Cummings, MD, ScD, Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health
70. Dementia Alliance of North Carolina
71. The Emory Goizueta Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center
72. Eli Lilly & Company
73. Eisai Inc.
74. Fayron Epps, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, Nell Hodgson School of Nursing, Emory University
75. Financial Services Innovation Coalition (FSIC)
76. Lynda Everman, Alzheimer’s Advocate and Former Care Partner
77. Franklin & Kyle Elder Law, LLC
78. Fuerza Contra Alzheimer’s
79. Adam Gazzaley, MD, PhD Professor, Neurology - UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences; Founding Director of Neuroscape University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine
80. Genentech
81. Genworth Financial
82. Georgetown University Medical Center Memory Disorders Program
83. Gerontological Society of America
84. Global Alzheimer’s Platform Foundation (GAP)
85. Global Neuroscience Institute
86. Laura N. Gitlin, Ph.D., FGSA, FAAN, Distinguished University Professor and Dean, College of Nursing and Health Professions, Executive Director, The AgeWell Collaboratory
87. Jill M. Goldstein, Ph.D. Professor of Psychiatry & Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Founder and Exec. Director, Innovation Center on Sex Differences in Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH); and the Helen T. Moershner MGH Research Institute Chair in Women’s Health
88. Guadalupe Centers
89. HADASSAH, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
90. Health Equity Collaborative
91. HealthyWomen
92. International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association
93. The John A. Hartford Foundation
94. Healthcare Leadership Council
95. HFC (formerly Hilarity for Charity)
96. Hispanic Neuropsychological Society
97. David P. Hoffman, DPS, CCE, Associate Professor of Ethics and Health Policy and Associate Dean for
   Academic Initiatives, Maria College
98. Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
99. Howard Fillit MD, Founding Executive Director and Chief Science Officer, Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery
   Foundation
100. Innovation Center on Sex Differences in Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital
101. Melora Jackson, MS, Virtual Dementia Tour, Clinical Manager at Second Wind Dreams
102. Jiminy Wicket
103. Justice in Aging
104. Former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI); Founder, The Kennedy Forum; Co-Founder, One Mind
105. Kenneth M. Langa, MD, PhD, Cyrus Sturgis Professor of Internal Medicine, Gerontology, and Health
    Management & Policy, University of Michigan
106. Glen A. Kyle, J.D., CELA
107. Latino Alzheimer’s and Memory Disorders Alliance
108. LEAD Coalition (Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer’s Disease)
109. Lewy Body Dementia Association
110. Dale Libby, CEO, Brazoria County Gathering Place Interfaith Ministries, Inc.
111. Livpact Inc.
112. Dr. Kristine Lokken, Brain Health Institute
113. MANA, A National Latina Organization
114. Marilyn’s Legacy
115. Massachusetts Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center
116. Mattie Rhodes Center
117. Medical Fitness Association
118. Thomas J. Mclnerney, President & CEO, Genworth Financial
119. Merck & Co., Inc.
120. Mental Health America of Hawaii
121. Milken Institute Center for the Future of Aging
122. Morehouse School of Medicine
123. Richard Morgan, PhD, Retired Presbyterian (USA) Minister, Author, Co-Founder,
    ClergyAgainstAlzheimer’s Network
124. National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
125. National Association for Female Executives (NAFE)
126. National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
127. National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD)
128. National Assoc of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)
129. National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC)
130. National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)
131. National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
132. National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)
133. National Consumers League
134. National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
135. National Hispanic Council on Aging
136. National Hispanic Medical Association
137. National Kidney Foundation
138. National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices
139. National Urban League
140. Neurocern
141. Thomas O. Obisesan, M.D., MPH, Professor of Medicine, Howard University
142. One Mind
143. Partnership for Innovation and Empowerment
144. Carmen Pastor, President/Founder, Fuerza Contra Alzheimer’s
145. Adriana Perez, PhD, CRNP, ANP-BC, FAAN, FGSA, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Senior Fellow, Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing
146. Miller Piggot, Executive Director, Alzheimer's of Central Alabama
147. Posit Science
148. Daniel C. Potts, MD, FAAN
149. Judi Pritchard, ED, Founder, President, Care & Thrive Foundation
150. Prothena
151. ProVention Health Foundation
152. PublicHealthMaps
153. Diane Rojas, Vice President of Health & Human Services, Associate Director Social Services at Guadalupe Centers, Inc.
154. Sandra Eskenazi Center for Brain Care Innovation
155. Quincy Miles Samus, Ph.D., Director, Translational Aging Services Core, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Johns Hopkins Medicine
156. June Sanson, Senior Director, Patient Advocacy and Industry Relations at ACADIA Pharmaceuticals Inc.
157. David Satcher, MD, PhD Founding Director and Senior Advisor; (former) 16th Surgeon General of the United States Satcher Health Leadership Institute, Morehouse School of Medicine
158. Kathleen Sebelius, 21st United States Secretary of Health and Human Services; 44th Governor of Kansas
159. Second Wind Dreams, Inc./ Virtual Dementia Tour
160. Southern Christian Leadership Conference
161. Betty Spence, President, National Association for Female Executives (NAFE)
162. Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, MD, President at SRS Heart, Center for Women’s Prevention, Health and Wellness
163. Diane Stephenson, Executive Director, Critical Path for Parkinson's at Critical Path Institute (C-Path)
164. MaryAnne Sterling, LivPact Inc.
165. Susie Stiles, LCSW
166. Rudolph Tanzi, PhD, Department of Neurology, MGH/Harvard Medical School
167. Pierre N. Tariot, MD, Director, Banner Alzheimer’s Institute
168. Dr. Philip Tipton, MD, Movement Disorders Fellow, Assistant Professor at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN
169. Program to Improve Eldercare
170. Trust for America’s Health (TFAH)
171. Anne Tumlinson, President and Chief Executive Officer Anne Tumlinson Innovations
172. Jamie TenNapel Tyrone, Advocate, Author, and President/CEO of Beating Alzheimer’s By Embracing Science (B.A.B.E.S.)
173. UnidosNow, Inc.
174. UnidosUS
175. UsAgainstAlzheimer’s
176. Volunteers of America
177. William Vega, PhD, Board Member, UsAgainstAlzheimer’s; Emeritus Provost Professor, University of Southern California
178. Anand Viswanathan, MD, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center
179. Victoria Walker, MD, CEO CodaCare Consulting
180. Virtual Brain Health Center
181. Don Wendorf, Psy.D., Retired Psychologist and Marriage & Family Therapist, Alzheimer’s Advocate and Author
182. The Kennedy Forum
183. The Redstone Center for Prevention and Wellness
184. URAC
185. Washington University School of Medicine, Department of Neurology
186. The Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement
187. Women Inspiring Scientific Progress (WISP)
188. Kristine Yaffe, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology and Epidemiology, Psychiatry, UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences; Roy and Marie Scola Endowed Chair; Vice Chair of Research in Psychiatry UCFS School of Medicine
189. YMCA of the USA

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For more information and/or to sign on to this statement, contact Kelly O’Brien at UsAgainstAlzheimer’s @ kobrien@usagainstalzheimers.org