

## Alzheimer's Prevention & Risk Reduction: UsAgainstAlzheimer's Role in Changing the Conversation Around Alzheimer's Risk From Inevitable to Modifiable

Until recently, many researchers, scientists, and doctors did not believe that it may be possible to prevent Alzheimer's and related dementias or that one's risk for such diseases could be reduced by living a brain healthy lifestyle. Similar to early thinking on heart disease, Alzheimer's was approached as an inevitability of growing older. It is now broadly accepted that the risks of heart disease can be significantly minimized through lifestyle changes that impact overall health, a lens through which we can now look at Alzheimer's.

UsAgainstAlzheimer's refused to accept what many believed – that Alzheimer's disease is inevitable. The organization stepped out on its own to convene nearly 200 changemakers, conduct research, and led the effort of shifting the conversation of Alzheimer's as an inevitable part of aging, to one of brain health, general wellbeing, and the idea that Alzheimer's risk could be minimized.

Raising brain health and prevention in conversations with industry leaders and policymakers and educating the public, UsAgainstAlzheimer's focused efforts on African Americans, Latinos, and women – all populations at increased risk of developing Alzheimer's.

The addition of a new goal to the National Alzheimer's Plan Act by Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, "**promote healthy aging and reduce risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias**," demonstrates a national commitment to the fight against this disease and a changing tide on Alzheimer's prevention.

***Follow the timeline of UsAgainstAlzheimer's work to make brain health, prevention, and Alzheimer's risk reduction a federal priority.***

**April 2019**

UsAgainstAlzheimer's releases a call to action on brain health: **Create an Optimal System of Brain Health Care**. This [white paper](#) outlines a vision for an optimal system of care in which healthcare providers help patients build brain health across the lifespan, detect cognitive decline in its earliest stage, and deliver interventions to drive better outcomes.

**October 2019**

Leading Alzheimer's organizations join UsAgainstAlzheimer's in supporting a national goal to prevent Alzheimer's. At the [2019 National Alzheimer's Summit](#), experts from the Milken Institute, Wake Forest School of Medicine, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) join UsAgainstAlzheimer's in supporting a national goal to prevent Alzheimer's.

**November 2019**

**UsAgainstAlzheimer's launches the Brain Health Partnership.** The [Partnership](#) is a comprehensive strategy to ensure brain health is included as an element of overall good health and that cognitive decline is identified and addressed in a timely manner.

**July 2020**

**Nearly 200 organizations & experts support a call to action for a national goal to prevent Alzheimer's.** UsAgainstAlzheimer's released a call to action statement, [The United States Needs a National Alzheimer's Prevention Goal](#), which underscores the need for a national goal to prevent Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Organizations and experts from across the country, including patient advocacy groups, disease-specific organizations, and corporations, signed on in support of the goal.

**August 2020**

**UsAgainstAlzheimer's Announces the Creation of the Center for Brain Health Equity.** In partnership with prominent national Black and Latino health provider associations and with funding from the CDC, UsAgainstAlzheimer's launched the [Center for Brain Health Equity](#). The Center collaborates with nursing professionals and community-based organizations to develop effective and tailored public health strategies for African American and Latino communities, which are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

**December 2020**

**UsAgainstAlzheimer's launches the National Alzheimer's Disease Index (NADEX).** The [NADEX](#) is an online brain health equity hub that houses data and insights on the impacts of Alzheimer's on communities of color and women, continuing UsAgainstAlzheimer's commitment to focusing brain health and prevention efforts on populations most at risk for Alzheimer's.

**December 2021**

**Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra includes a national goal to promote health aging and reduce risk factors for Alzheimer's.** Representing a national commitment to the fight against Alzheimer's disease, Secretary Becerra makes brain health and Alzheimer's prevention a new national priority.

**April 2020**

**UsAgainstAlzheimer's convenes meeting with nationally respected brain health leaders and changemakers.** Joined by former Secretary of Health and Human Services [Kathleen Sebelius](#), former U.S. Surgeon General [Dr. David Satcher](#), then-Representative [Donna Shalala](#), and others, UsAgainstAlzheimer's spotlighted the importance of brain health and risk reduction in a high-level convening.

**August 2020**

**The Lancet commission updates 2017 report on risk factors for dementia.** Building on a report released in 2017 which identified nine potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia, the Commission on Dementia Prevention, Intervention, and Care identified an additional three risk factors in their [2020 report](#). The 12 risk factors are: less education, hypertension, hearing impairment, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, infrequent social contact, less education, hypertension, hearing impairment, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, and infrequent social contact. These risk factors account for approximately 40% of dementia cases worldwide, which theoretically could be prevented or delayed through lifestyle interventions.

**November 2020**

**UsAgainstAlzheimer's Invited to Co-Chair Risk Reduction Subcommittee.** The Federal Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care and Services [recommends](#) the development of a national prevention goal and invites UsAgainstAlzheimer's to co-chair an ad-hoc Risk Reduction Subcommittee alongside the Alzheimer's Association and CDC.

**July 2021**

**Federal Advisory Council unanimously votes to include the Risk Reduction Subcommittee recommendation for a goal in its recommendations to the Secretary for the National Plan Update.** This [recommendation](#) was delivered to the desk of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra for his consideration to include in the annual update to the National Alzheimer's Plan.