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Department of Health

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PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska's Fresh Start campaign expands to address dementia

AUGUST 20, 2024 — The Division of Public Health's Fresh Start campaign has expanded to include the [Dementia Education and Prevention Program](#), by sharing resources and encouraging Alaskans to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's and dementia. Building on Fresh Start's success in connecting thousands of residents to support to feel better and improve their health as they age, this new resource is in response to [HB 308](#). That bill was passed by the 32nd Legislature and signed by Governor Mike Dunleavy.

Across the nation, Alaska has the fastest growing population of adults 65 and older. An estimated 10% of Alaska seniors have Alzheimer's Disease and related types of dementia. The number of Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease is projected to reach about 11,000 in 2025.

"Our brains are designed to store a lifetime of memories, solve life's most complex problems, and instantly turn mere thoughts into our best actions," said Dr. Robert Lawrence, Alaska's chief medical officer. "Just like the rest of the body, our brains need to be exercised and provided with good nutrition to avoid deterioration in the complex network of neurons and synapses that give us the ability to think, act, remember, and communicate. If you want support to your health, body and mind, Alaska's Fresh Start programs are here when you are ready."

In addition to educational materials, the Dementia Education and Prevention Program is coordinating supportive services across the state to provide individuals, families and providers with the best resources to plan, prevent, screen for, and manage dementia.

"There is strong evidence that healthy habits reduce risk of Alzheimer's and dementia," said Stephanie Smith, Alaska's Dementia Education and Prevention Program Manager. "These habits can also slow its progression. The same habits that reduce chances of chronic diseases may also protect brain health."

Learn more about actions you can take and programs you can join for better health at freshstart.alaska.gov.

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