

Alaska Dementia Education and Prevention Program

FY2025 ANNUAL REPORT

State of Alaska

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Dementia Education and Prevention Program

About the Program

The Alaska Department of Health created the [Dementia Education and Prevention Program](#) following passage of [AS 18.09.300](#) to improve dementia awareness and related health care. The program focuses on health changes people can make to reduce their chances of developing dementia. It aims to improve early diagnosis, treatment, and resources for providers and caregivers. The program supports the work of the Alaska Dementia Action Collaborative to expand resources statewide focused on risk reduction and outreach, access to services, and caregiver support.

Alaska's population of adults 65 and older is expected to increase by nearly 20% by 2050.¹ An estimated 9% of Alaska seniors have Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia.² By 2050, the projected number of people with Alzheimer's disease is expected to nearly double.³

Accomplishments

During State Fiscal Year 2025, the Dementia Education and Prevention Program leveraged the success of Alaska's [Fresh Start campaign](#) that connects Alaskans with programs for better health. Fresh Start promotes programs that support Alaskans to increase their physical activity, choose healthy foods and drinks, prevent and manage diabetes, lower blood pressure, and quit smoking. These healthy behaviors are also known to reduce the risk of developing dementia. Combining dementia prevention education with the promotion of related Fresh Start programs resulted in the efficient extension of an existing state campaign with a proven track record.

Additional key accomplishments include:

- **Collection of feedback** from attendees at 19 community events to better understand Alaskans' use of dementia risk reduction strategies
- **Distribution of dementia messaging**, including culturally tailored public service announcements translated into Alaska Native languages and aired through radio stations that reach rural communities
- **Completion of an Alaska-specific toolkit** that assists providers with cognitive screening and early detection, diagnoses, resources, and referrals
- **Caregiving and provider summits** held in Anchorage and Fairbanks
- **Partnership with University of Alaska peer health educators** to incorporate dementia risk reduction messaging in health outreach programs while building awareness in the future healthcare workforce
- **Development of brain health curriculum to use in school districts across the state** in grades K-5

Barriers

Up to 45% of dementias may be avoided by making healthy choices.⁴ More education is needed about the importance of making these choices early instead of changing habits later, like staying active, eating healthy and preventing hearing loss. Early detection of cognitive decline through screening can also help Alaskans plan for their future, find support earlier, and potentially benefit from new medications. Long wait lists for specialty providers and extensive travel needed to attend medical appointments increase the demand for locally trained providers to diagnose and treat patients as dementia progresses. More local housing and caregiving services are needed to help Alaskans with dementia stay in their home communities.

Spending time with loved ones can reduce chances of dementia.



In 2023
25,000
Alaskans provided
39 million hours
of unpaid care
to adults with
dementia²

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Recommendations for priorities in Alaska

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Brain Initiative established a Public Health Action Agenda.⁵ This agenda identifies specific areas of focus for the Alaska Department of Health and other recipients of the federal [Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure \(BOLD\) Grant](#). Using this public health approach, priorities focus on educating Alaskans on actions that can reduce chances for dementia.

- 1** Run a statewide campaign to educate all Alaskans about risk reduction strategies and connect adults to programs that can improve the health of the brain and the body
- 2** Educate providers and the public on the importance of cognitive screening and early detection
- 3** Develop training opportunities to improve dementia-specific skills for caregivers, community health workers, and community health aides
- 4** Deliver early risk-reduction programs at elementary and secondary school and university levels

DEMENTIA RESOURCES IN ALASKA

- **Aging and Disability Resource Centers:**
<https://health.alaska.gov/en/services/aging-and-disability-resource-centers-adrc/>
- **Alaska Dementia Action Collaborative Caregiver Resource Guide:**
<https://akoltco.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ADAC-%E2%80%93-Caregiver-Resource-Guide-INT.pdf>
- **Alaska Dementia Education and Prevention Program links:**
 - <https://health.alaska.gov/en/division-of-public-health/chronic-disease-prevention/dementia-education-and-prevention/>
 - <https://health.alaska.gov/en/education/dementia-education/>
- **Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska:** <https://www.alzaska.org/>
- **Fresh Start: Programs for Better Health**

Fresh Start is an Alaska campaign that connects adults to programs that help to prevent and manage chronic diseases. The campaign also shares healthy habits to improve the health of the body and brain.

 - <https://freshstart.alaska.gov>
 - <https://health.alaska.gov/en/services/fresh-start/reduce-your-chances-of-dementia/>

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