Administration for Community Living

ACL Response to COVID-19

ACL webpage to provide information in support of older adults and people with disabilities. https://acl.gov/COVID-19

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National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center (https://nadrc.acl.gov/)

November 19, 2020--Maintaining Services and Supports for People Living with Dementia and their Caregivers During COVID-19 (Christine Jensen, Riverside Center for Excellence in Aging and Lifelong Health, Maria Ordonez, Florida Atlantic University)

January 13, 2021--*Reaching Socially Isolated People Living with Dementia.* (Carol Manning, University of Virginia; Mike Splaine, Splaine Consulting)

COMING SOON! February 9, 2021 from 2-3 p.m. ET--Please join the National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center for the webinar, **Exploring Male Caregiving for People Living with Dementia. Webinar Registration**

Recordings of webinars will be posted on NADRC website at: https://nadrc.acl.gov/.

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RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council (FCAC)

Five Priority Areas:
- Awareness and Outreach for Family caregivers.
- Engagement of Family Caregivers as Partners in Healthcare and Long-Term Services and Supports.
- Services and Supports for Family Caregivers.
- Financial and Workplace Security for Family Caregivers.
- Research, Data and Evidence-Informed Practices.

Recommendations are the foundation for the National Family Caregiving Strategy.

Recommendations focus on:
- Increase public awareness and recognition of family caregiver needs.
- Improving outreach.
- Promote expansion of public/private partnerships.

- Include family caregivers as essential members of the care team and in all relevant care coordination and transitions.
- Increase the availability of high-quality, setting-appropriate, and caregiver-defined respite services.
- Increase the availability of diverse counseling, training, peer support, and education opportunities for family caregivers.
- Encourage use of technology, volunteers and volunteerism.
- Improve the support of family caregivers during emergencies.
- Increase and strengthen the paid LTSS and direct support workforce.
- Increase the availability, and use of, financial education and planning tools for family caregivers.
- Establish a national infrastructure using standardized data, questions, and a definition of "family caregiver" for obtaining analyzing, and disseminating information about caregivers and their experiences.

Next Steps:
- Complete the Council's Initial Report to Congress:
  – Review and clearance.
  – Dissemination plan and outreach.
- Develop the National Family Caregiving Strategy:
  – Based on adopted recommendations.
  – Informed outreach and public input.

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Office of Long-Term Ombudsman Programs

ACL's Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (OLTCOP) continues to provide training, technical assistance, to help states' Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) programs adapt to specific COVID-19 service provision to address the needs of individuals living with dementia in long-term care facilities.
- In September CMS revised their visitation guidance to allow for in-person visits in nursing homes, recognizing the need to reduce the harmful effects of social isolation. Where possible, Ombudsman programs are conducting facility visits and continuing to provide complaint resolution services to support the health safety, welfare and rights of persons in long-term care facility settings.

ACL's funded The National Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC)--In partnership with Dr. Sheri Gibson published a free, four-part series for three audiences: 1. family members of individuals living in long-term care facilities; 2. facility administrators; and 3. direct care staff. In the series, Dr. Gibson provides training on the following topics: person-centered care, trauma-informed care, compassion fatigue, and anxiety and grief in a time of COVID-19. Each topic will include one webinar recording and slides for each audience.
https://ltcombudsman.org/omb_support/COVID-19/training-series.

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National Center on Law & Elder Rights: Resources for Professionals

Legal Training: Webinar Recordings & Materials on Capacity Issues & Decision Supports:
- Decision-Making Supports: The Role of the Supporter or Advocate.
- Working with Clients With Diminished Capacity.
- Using Supported Decision Making to Avoid Guardianship.

Case Consultations:
- Free case consultation assistance for attorneys and professionals seeking information to help older adults on topics impacting older adults, including decision supports, capacity issues, and advance directives.
- Request online or email ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov.

Capacity-Building:
- Available for technical assistance on capacity building topics, such as partnerships, referrals and issue spotting, including issues related to decisional supports for older adults.

Elder Justice Toolkit: Resources for professionals on responses and remedies to elder abuse, including trauma Trauma-Informed Lawyering.

In partnership with ABA Commission on Law & Aging: Supporting Decision Making Across the Age Spectrum.

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Information Requests/Funding Opportunities/Partnerships

Development of Cost-Effective and Customizable Training and Education Platforms for AD/ADRD Caregivers that Focus on Addressing Financial Management and Legal Planning (R43/R44 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-21-025.html.

Request for Information-Landscape Analysis To Leverage Novel Technologies for Chronic Disease Management for Aging Underserved Populations https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/11/17/2020-25328/request-for-information-landscape-analysis-to-leverage-novel-technologies-for-chronic-disease.

Improving Access to Older Adult Health Data for Timely Use Amid COVID-19 and Beyond https://www.data.gov/meta/data-gov-creates-one-stop-shop-for-datasets-on-the-health-of-older-adults.

ACL and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health launched the MENTAL Health Challenge to combat the social isolation and loneliness that older adults, people with disabilities and veterans often experience. A total of $750,000 in prizes will be awarded for development of an easy-to-use online system that offers recommendations for programs, activities and resources that can help users connect to others and engage in the community, based on their individual needs, interests and abilities. The winning system will be announced and

demonstrated in January 2021 at CES. https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/06/23/hhs-announces-mental-health-innovation-challenge.html.

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Baby Boomer Caregivers Report Poor Health

A CDC study found that 1 in 4 baby boomers are caregivers and reported having more chronic disease, more disability, and lower self-rated health than non-caregivers.

Poor health puts baby boomer caregivers at risk for needing care themselves.

To learn more, you can read the web feature in English or Spanish, listen to a short podcast about the study, and view a 30-second animated graphic.

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COVID-19 and Older Adults
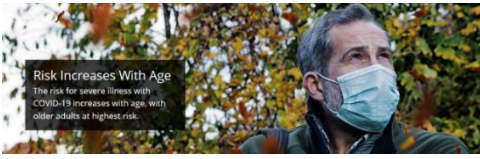
Older adults are at higher risk of getting sick and having significant health complications from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

An analysis of more than 114,000 COVID-19 associated deaths during May-August 2020, found that 78% of the people who died were aged 65 and older.

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Short Self-Reported Sleep Duration Among Caregivers and Non-Caregivers
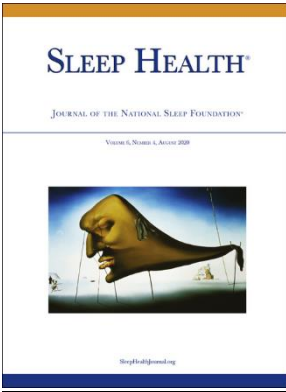
This article, based on 2016 BRFSS data, found that caregivers were more likely to report short sleep duration (less than 7 hours of sleep per night) than non-caregivers. Length and intensity of caregiving was related to shorter sleep as well.

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Food and the Aging Brain: Updates on Nutrition and Cognitive Health in Older Adults

On November 19, the Food Forum hosted a 1.5-hour webinar that explored the relationship between nutrition and dietary patterns and the aging brain. Speakers discussed an overview of the dimensions of cognitive health, nutrition, and specific nutrients for cognitive function, as well as the relationship between nutrition and mental health in older adults. CDC participated in the session.

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A Public Health Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementias
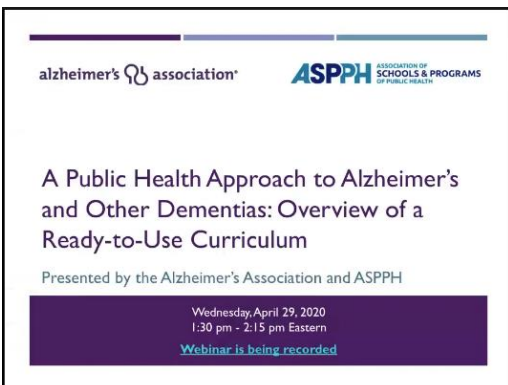
A Public Health Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementias: Overview of a Ready-to-Use Curriculum

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30-second Animated Video on Baby Boomer Caregivers

[Baby boomer caregivers](#) report more chronic disease, disability, and frequent mental stress than non-caregivers.

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The Importance of Physical Activity for Older Adults (Español)

[Podcast](#): Regular physical activity is linked to a lower risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, some cancers, and even Alzheimer's disease. People may feel better each time they are active. Find out how much activity people should be getting, and the type of activities recommended for older adults.

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COVID-19 Impact on Medicare Beneficiaries

In October CMS published survey information about Medicare beneficiaries' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common types of foregone care were dental care, followed by regular check-up, treatment for ongoing condition(s), and diagnostic or medical screening test. Respondents stated care was foregone due to not wanting to be at risk in a medical facility. Beneficiaries also reported feeling more stressed and anxious, lonely or sad, less financially secure, and less socially connected to family and friends. Information at: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicare-current-beneficiary-survey-covid-19-data-snapshot-infographic-fall-2020.pdf. (Strategy 2.F)

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Medicaid Long-Term Care Rebalancing Report

In November CMS released the Long-term Services and Supports (LTSS) Rebalancing Toolkit to support states in their efforts to expand and enhance home and community-based services. Information at: https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/downloads/ltss-rebalancing-toolkit.pdf. (Strategy 2.G)

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Acute Hospital Care at Home

In November CMS expanded the Hospital Without Walls program to permit participating hospitals to serve beneficiaries who require acute inpatient admission to a hospital and who require at least daily rounding by a physician and a medical team monitoring their care needs on an ongoing basis in their own homes. Information at: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-acute-hospital-care-home-faqs.pdf. (Strategy 2.F)

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Medicaid Roadmap for States to Address Social Determinants of Health

In January 2021 CMS released guidance for State Medicaid Agencies to drive the adoption of strategies that address social determinants of health in Medicaid, so states can improve beneficiary health outcomes, reduce health disparities, and lower overall costs in Medicaid and CHIP. Information at: https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/sho21001.pdf. (Strategy 2.G)

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Update to Medicare Learning Network Clinician Educational Tool

In November CMS updated clinician guidance for the cognitive screening portion of the Annual Wellness Visit and Welcome to Medicare Visit to add "you may also consider the use of a brief cognitive test as well as health disparities, chronic conditions, and other factors that contribute to increased risk of cognitive impairment." Information at: https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/preventive-services/medicare-wellness-visits.html. (Strategy 1.C)

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Update to National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes for Q2 2020

In January 2021 CMS updated data on the percentage of long-stay nursing home residents receiving an antipsychotic medication, excluding those residents diagnosed with schizophrenia, Huntington's Disease or Tourette's Syndrome. Information at: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/antipsychotic-medication-use-data-report-2020q2-updated-01222021.pdf. (Strategy 2.D)

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IHS Response to COVID-19

The Indian Health Service continues to work closely with our tribal partners and state and local public health officials to coordinate a comprehensive public health response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. https://www.ihs.gov/coronavirus

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Coordination with ACL Office for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Programs (Title VI)

The IHS meets weekly with the ACL Office for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Programs to coordinate and facilitate communication with elder services in Tribal communities about the public health response to COVID-19.

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NIH National Institutes of Health

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

Final Report Released for 2020 Dementia Care, Caregiving, and Services Virtual Summit Series

The Final Report for the 2020 National Research Summit on Care, Services, and Supports for Persons with Dementia and their Caregivers has been released. You can find the final report, gaps and opportunities, and the meeting materials and recordings at https://www.nia.nih.gov/2020-dementia-care-summit.

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2021 Alzheimer's Disease Research Summit

Please save the date for the 2021 Alzheimer's Disease Research Summit planned for April 19-22, 2021. This will be a virtual meeting. Further information will be shared with the NAPA listserv soon.

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NIA--DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA): NIA has recently published the following funding opportunities:

- **Music and Health: Understanding and Developing Music Medicine** (R21, R01): This FOA is intended to: (1) increase our understanding of how music affects the brain when it is used therapeutically and/or (2) use that knowledge to better develop evidence-based music interventions to enhance health or treat specific diseases and disorders. The National Institute on Aging will support applications proposing aging-relevant basic research (in animal models and human subjects) and mechanism-focused, aging-relevant clinical trials.
- **Notice of NIH Participation in Smart Health and Biomedical Research in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Data Science** (NOT-OD-21-011): The purpose of this Notice is to announce the collaboration between the NIH and the National Science Foundation (NSF) on an interagency funding opportunity, Smart Health and Biomedical Research in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Data Science. NIA is interested in the development of technologies, analytics and models that utilize novel technologies and informatics approaches to understand mechanisms of aging and to improve older adults' health. Through this solicitation, NIA is interested in funding research centered on the use of big data analytics and smart and connected health technologies, and methods to facilitate the efficient and effective collection, analysis, interpretation, flow, and use of health information to improve age-related outcomes, decrease health disparities and improve care delivery of older adults.

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New Behavioral and Social Science Concepts Approved by the National Advisory Council on Aging

On January 12-13, 2021, the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA) approved scientific concepts of interest including:

- Data Enhancements and Analyses to Clarify the Relationship between Education and Cognitive Function (including AD/ADRD and Dementia).
- Screening and Intervening in Primary Care for the Maltreatment of Older & Vulnerable Adults with MC and AD/ADRD.

Approved concepts are posted at https://www.nia.nih.gov/approved-concepts to alert the research community in advance of potential new Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). Note that not all concepts will lead to the publication of an FOA.

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NIA--DIVISION OF NEUROSCIENCE ACTIVITIES

Brain Donation
NIA joined the Neurobiobank (NBB) in 2018. As part of the effort to increase the number and make the best scientific use of the donations received, NIA meets regularly with a small group of neuropathology core leaders from the Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) and the Neurobiobank teams. One outcome of those meetings was clarification on the research needs and which are best supported by NBB or the ADRC Neuropathology cores. To support public awareness of both what is needed and what might be less valuable, the following resources have been made available:

- Collaboration, culture, coordination: Keys to supporting brain donation (NIA Blog Post).
- Brain Donation: A Gift for Future Generations (NIA Health Information).
- Brain Donation Social Media Toolkit.

To support access to brain tissue for researchers, the Biospecimen Locator was established at the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC). This is a central location where researchers can determine which ADRC might have the specific type of tissue available that they need for their research. The ADRCs are polled annually to update availability, and one of the review criteria for ADRC grants relates to sharing and collaboration.

In addition, a *Brief Data Set* for Neuropathology on non-ADRC participants was established at NACC to enable autopsy data to be included from autopsy cases that were not included as part of the Clinical Core at the ADRC. While the primary driver for developing this capability was to increase the inclusion of neuropathology data from people who had Down Syndrome, it also will augment the availability of a broad array of carefully collected neuropathology data to the wider research community.

These activities relate to the Advisory Council's 2020 recommendation to expand access to brain tissue needed for AD/ADRD research purposes.

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On January 12-13, 2021, the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA) approved scientific concepts of interest including:

- Early and Late-Stage Clinical Trials for the Spectrum of Alzheimer's Disease Alzheimer's Related Dementias and Age-Related Cognitive Decline.
- Elucidating the Roles of Transposable Elements in Alzheimer's Disease and Aging.
- High Resolution Mapping of Biomolecules in Aging and AD Brains.
- Pilot Studies for the Spectrum of Alzheimer's Disease/Alzheimer's Disease Related Dementias and Age-Related Cognitive Decline.
- Role of adaptive immunity in etiology of Alzheimer's Disease.

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National Institute on Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

NINDS Open and Upcoming ADRD Funding Opportunities
Recently released FOAs include:

- RFA-NS-21-008: **Treatments for LBD-Exploratory Clinical Trial**--to encourage exploratory clinical trials (Phase I or II) testing either new or repurposed drugs or devices to treat patients with LBD. Application due date: March 2, 2021.
- RFA-NS-21-005 & RFA-NS-21-004: **Small Vessel VCID Biomarker Validation for Clinical Trials & Coordinating Center**--to continue support for a consortium (currently implemented as MarkVCID) to develop and validate high-quality small vessel VCID biomarkers ready for use in clinical trials, and for generating scientific breakthroughs in the understanding and treatment of VCID. Application due dates: March 9, 2021.

In FY21, applications have been received under several FOAs responsive to the 2019 ADRD Summit milestones:

- NOT-NS-21-001: **Administrative Supplements for Connecting Pre-mortem Clinical Information with Post-Mortem Brain Analysis in LBD**--to increase the linkage of comprehensive pre-mortem clinical information with gold standard post-mortem diagnostic analysis in patients with LBD.
- RFA-NS-21-003: **Center Without Walls for Molecular Mechanisms of Neurodegeneration in FTD**--to continue support for interdisciplinary team science aimed at elucidating the molecular mechanisms underlying neurodegeneration in FTD, with a focus on examining the role of tau, TDP-43 or FUS pathogenesis, and specific genetic causes and risks factors.
- RFA-NS-21-006: **Mechanisms of Pathological Spread of Abnormal Proteins in LBD and FTD**--to increase basic and clinical research on how abnormal proteins spread in the nervous system of LBD and FTD patients.
- RFA-NS-21-007: **Mechanisms of Selective Vulnerability in LBD and FTD**--to increase basic and clinical research on why certain brain regions are more vulnerable to abnormal protein accumulation and damage.

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Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

HRQ Upcoming ADRD Funding Opportunity

Notice of Intent to Publish Funding Opportunity Announcement to Improve the Nonsurgical Management of Urinary Incontinence in Women ([NOT-HS-20-014](NOT-HS-20-014)), including interventions that address co-existing conditions such as cognitive impairment or AD/ADRD.

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Other Updates

AHRQ will be conducting an evidence review on racial and ethnic bias in clinical algorithms and will be publishing an RFI later this month to inform the report.

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