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alzheimer's public health news

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More Evidence Found of Diabetes-Alzheimer's Link

A study recently published in the journal *Neurology* provides further evidence that diabetes may increase the risk of dementia. Researchers found that seniors with diabetes were at significantly greater risk of developing all-cause dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and vascular dementia within the next 15 years.

The study included over 1,000 people in Japan without dementia who were 60 years or older and were living in a specific community. They were followed for an average of 15 years. Blood sugar levels were measured at the beginning of the study; dementia diagnoses were made during the follow up period.

Scientists do not yet know exactly how Alzheimer's and diabetes are connected, but they do know that excess blood sugar or insulin can harm the brain in several ways:

- Diabetes raises the risk of heart disease and stroke, which hurt the heart and blood vessels. Damaged blood vessels in the brain may contribute to Alzheimer's disease.
- The brain depends on many different chemicals, which may be unbalanced by too much insulin. Some of these changes may help trigger Alzheimer's disease.
- High blood sugar causes inflammation. This may damage brain cells and help Alzheimer's to develop.

With this emerging evidence, the public health community has the opportunity to undertake public health campaigns to promote brain health and healthy living practices. By combining diabetes campaigns and brain health promotion messages, public health officials can potentially

Public Health Agenda



The Alzheimer's Association has identified three key elements of an Alzheimer's public health agenda: surveillance, early detection, and promotion of brain

health.

The 10 Warning Signs



The Know the 10 Signs campaign

is a national education effort to increase awareness of the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease and the benefits of early detection and diagnosis.

Contact

For more information on the Healthy Brain Initiative, the public health agenda, or Alzheimer's disease in general, contact

[Catherine Morrison](#).



change the course of two leading causes of morbidity and mortality. The full study can be found [here](#).

New Report Details Challenges Faced by People with Alzheimer's and their Families



The *National Alzheimer's Project Act* was passed unanimously by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Obama on January 4, 2011. The law will create a

national strategic plan to address the rapidly escalating Alzheimer's crisis and will coordinate Alzheimer's disease efforts across the federal government.

In an effort to provide a platform for those directly affected by the disease, the Alzheimer's Association gathered public input through online submissions, a Telephone Town Hall and 132 public input sessions across the United States. More than 43,000 individuals from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico engaged in the public input process, including people living with the disease, caregivers, families, researchers, health care professionals, community leaders and many more.

The resulting report, [Alzheimer's from the Frontlines: Challenges a National Alzheimer's Plan Must Address](#), identifies ten key challenges that emerged throughout the public input process. Several are relevant to the public health community including:

- Lack of awareness of the impact of Alzheimer's,
- Difficulty with diagnosis,
- Ensuring better support for caregivers, and
- Reducing the disparities that exist among diverse and underserved communities.

While this report is focused on what the public believes the federal government should do in a National Alzheimer's Plan, many of the challenges faced by those with the disease and their families are equally relevant to the public health community.

Learn more about the report, download a copy, and find a factsheet specific to your state at www.alz.org/NAPA.

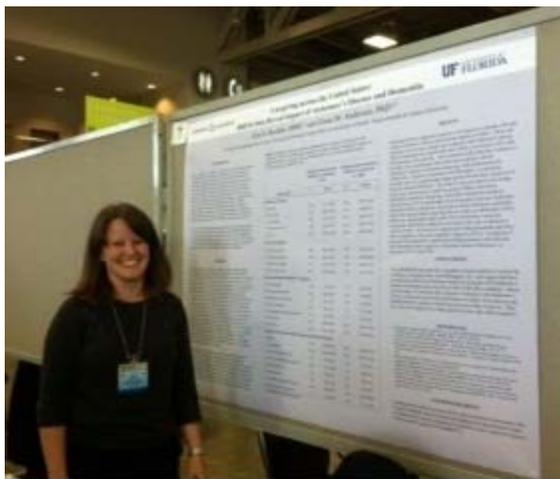
Alzheimer's Association Makes Presentations at American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual

Meeting

At the APHA Annual Meeting – the largest gathering of public health professionals in the country – the Alzheimer's Association presented two posters: one on the public health components of [State Government Alzheimer's Disease Plans](#), and the second on [caregiver data from the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\)](#) in Illinois, Louisiana, Ohio, and the District of Columbia.

In addition, the Association had a booth at the conference with information for public health professionals, physicians, and those interested in Alzheimer's policy. Available at the booth were the [Public Health Agenda](#) for combating Alzheimer's disease, the [Road Map](#) to maintaining cognitive health, and the [10 Warning Signs](#) of Alzheimer's disease. It is crucial that the public health community begin recognizing Alzheimer's disease as a public health crisis and undertake efforts to increase early detection and diagnosis.

For copies of the posters or information about the distributed materials, contact [Catherine Morrison](#).



Erin Bouldin, MPH presents the 2009 BRFSS results pertaining to caregiving.