THE ALZHEIMER'S Project

San Diego unites for a cure and care

ANNUAL REPORT ▪ 2020

LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

Table of Contents

Project Milestones

May 2014
San Diego County Board of Supervisors (BOS) unanimously voted to launch The Alzheimer's Project

March 2016
San Diego County BOS voted to apply to join AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities and become a Dementia Friendly America partner

April 2018
$1.3M National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant awarded to Sanford Burnham Prebys Discovery Institute, a Collaboration4Cure partner

2014 | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018**

San Diego County BOS approved regional strategy recommended by Collaboration4Cure, Clinical, Care and Public Awareness roundtable groups

March 2015

The Clinical Roundtable launched AlzDxRx, a mobile app for ADRD that physicians can use at point of care

July 2017

2

January

25 Dementia Friends Champions are trained to provide trainings on how to be a dementia friend

June

San Diego County BOS voted to expand the Alzheimer's Response Team (ART) into the cities of Escondido and La Mesa, as well as other areas served by the Sheriff's Department

December

Health systems across San Diego County pledged to achieve Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) under the San Diego Senior Emergency Care Initiative

Project Milestones

2019

The Respite Voucher Program is implemented to provide San Diego caregivers the support they need

February

The Aging Roadmap is launched by the San Diego County BOS and serves as a regional vision and framework for supporting healthy aging for people of all ages
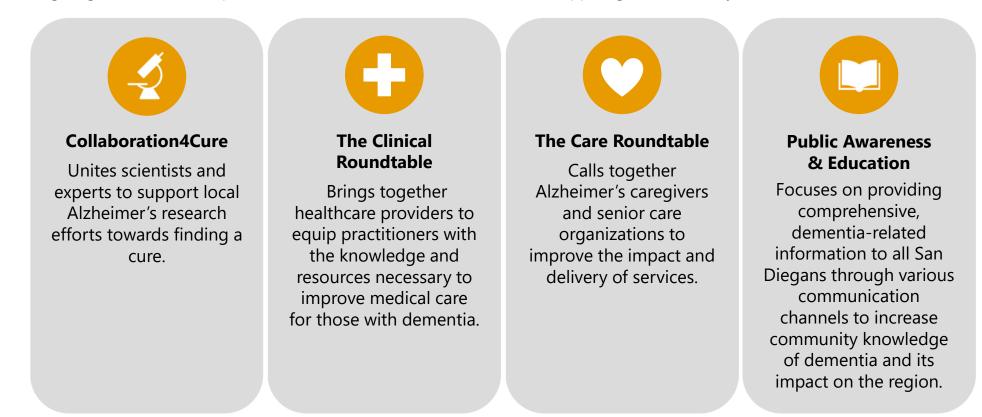
September

FIRST Program served 100 clients with a variety of supportive services, including dementia screenings and trainings

December

About The Alzheimer's Project

The Alzheimer's Project aims to address the devastating toll of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in San Diego County. It brings together teams of experts and decision-makers, which convene to support goals in four key focus areas of the initiative:

Collaboration4Cure

Unites scientists and experts to support local Alzheimer's research efforts towards finding a cure.

The Clinical Roundtable

Brings together healthcare providers to equip practitioners with the knowledge and resources necessary to improve medical care for those with dementia.

The Care Roundtable

Calls together Alzheimer's caregivers and senior care organizations to improve the impact and delivery of services.

Public Awareness & Education

Focuses on providing comprehensive, dementia-related information to all San Diegans through various communication channels to increase community knowledge of dementia and its impact on the region.

The Alzheimer's Project aligns with components of the County of San Diego's (County) 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, as well as the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision of a region that is healthy, safe and thriving. The work of The Alzheimer's Project is also included in the Roadmap for Aging in San Diego County (Aging Roadmap), a regional plan for services and supports for older adults now and into the future. Also included in the Aging Roadmap is Age Well San Diego, which enhances the work of the Alzheimer's Project by focusing efforts on creating a community that is dementia-friendly. Progress has been made in multiple domains since the project launched; however, the number of people affected by this disease is projected to rise significantly.
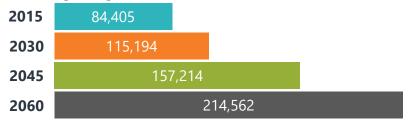
Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) in San Diego County

Prevalence

Dementia is an umbrella term for the loss of cognitive functioning and behavioral abilities that is severe enough to disrupt a person's abilities to carry out everyday tasks.[1] Alzheimer's disease, one of many types of dementia, is the most common type of dementia.[1] Other related dementias include frontotemporal dementia, Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia, and mixed dementia (having more than one type of dementia).[2] Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) pose a local and national public health challenge that impacts individuals and families of all backgrounds.

In 2017, Alzheimer's disease was the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.,[3] fourth in California,[4] and third in San Diego County.[5] Countywide, it is projected that over 98,000 San Diegans age 55 and older will be living with ADRD in 2020. This number is projected to increase to 115,194 in 2030. Countywide, this number is expected to increase by 36.5% between 2015 and 2030.[6]

Adults over the age of 55 who will have a diagnosis of ADRD, if nothing changes:

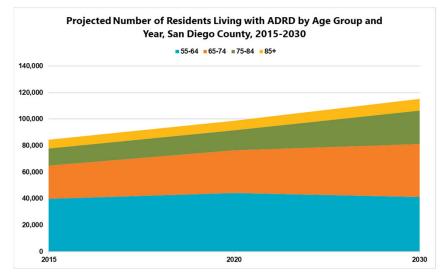| Year	Number
2015	84,405
2030	115,194
2045	157,214
2060	214,562

Prepared by: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Community Health Statistics Unit, 2020.

ADRD by Age

As the older adult population increases, it is anticipated that the number of San Diegans living with ADRD will also rise. The data below shows the projected number of residents living with ADRD by age for the years 2015, 2020, and 2030. By 2030, the number of San Diegans age 65 and older with ADRD is expected to reach 73,948. This is approximately a 66% increase from 44,465 affected in 2015.[6]

Although ADRD is commonly associated with older seniors, it is important to note that just under half of those living with ADRD in San Diego County in 2015 were between the ages of 55-64, and it is projected that in 2030, this age range will account for nearly 36% of cases.[6]
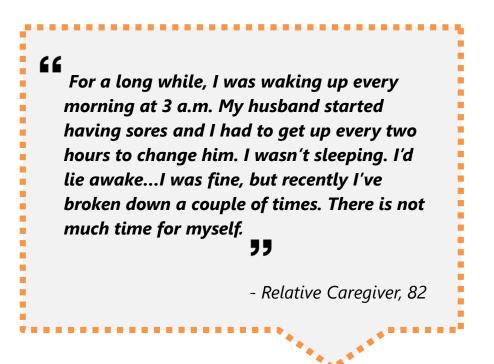

Projected Number of Residents Living with ADRD by Age Group and Year, San Diego County, 2015-2030

Prepared by: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Community Health Statistics Unit, 2020.

Family Caregivers: Unsung Heroes in Need of Support

Since the prevalence of ADRD is on the rise, many of our friends and neighbors may find themselves in a new role as a caregiver. Family caregivers play a crucial role in helping those with ADRD maintain a good quality of life and live comfortably at home for as long as possible.

While often rewarding, caregiving for someone with ADRD can be demanding and stressful. Initially, those living with ADRD may need only minimal support. Over time, however, caregivers must provide an increasing level of assistance, which may include dressing, feeding, toileting, managing medications, providing transportation, and supervising their loved one to ensure safety. Some caregivers cease paid employment in order to care for a loved one, which impacts their current and future financial situation.

Caregivers may also find that they are so consumed looking after their loved one that they neglect their own physical and mental health. It can be taxing to navigate fragmented health and social services systems. Feelings of isolation are common as it may become difficult to maintain friendships and get out of the house. Furthermore, caregivers may face painful social dynamics,

such as having to take away car keys from a parent or denying their spouse the freedom to engage in hobbies they once enjoyed that are no longer safe for them. These unsung heroes battle every day to provide their loved ones a life of maximum dignity, comfort, and meaning.

> " *For a long while, I was waking up every morning at 3 a.m. My husband started having sores and I had to get up every two hours to change him. I wasn't sleeping. I'd lie awake...I was fine, but recently I've broken down a couple of times. There is not much time for myself.* "
>
> *- Relative Caregiver, 82*

Family Caregivers: Unsung Heroes in Need of Support (cont.)

Fortunately, there is help. The Alzheimer's Project strives to improve the quality of life for caregivers by connecting caregivers to helpful programs and services and supporting the development of dementia-specific resources, such as respite programs. When caregivers have the opportunity to care for themselves—mind, body, and spirit—they can maintain the stamina necessary to continue their caregiving journey and tackle the evolving needs of caring for someone with ADRD. New community resources developed by the Care Roundtable are described later in this report.

> *To access caregiver resources in San Diego County call 800-339-4661 or visit*
> *www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov*

Want to know more?

The new Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias interactive dashboard gives users access to current health data, including prevalence by region, hospitalization, emergency department discharges, and more. You can select by condition, region, and related demographic and socioeconomic data and view the visualizations on your own screen.

For more information please visit www.sdhealthstatistics.com.

Collaboration4Cure

Collaboration4Cure (C4C) brings together researchers, physicians, and biotechnology representatives from San Diego County, who have a shared interest in finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD).

C4C is led by Alzheimer's San Diego, in partnership with the County of San Diego and City of San Diego, as well as some of the region's finest research institutes: The Salk Institute; Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute; The Scripps Research Institute; University of California, San Diego; and the J. Craig Venter Institute.

The group established and manages a regional fund that provides resources to support the most promising local research ideas and put them on a path for the discovery and translation of potential new and effective therapies for this disease.

Dementia Pathways & Disease Stages
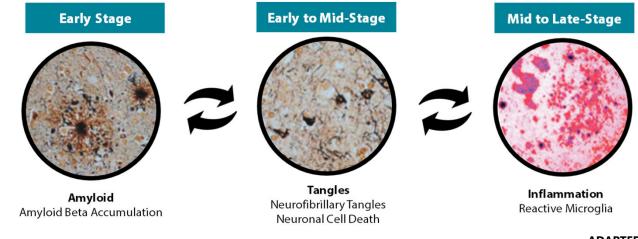
Alzheimer's disease is a progressive condition with symptoms that worsen over time. Disease progression is characterized by the development of amyloid plaques and tau tangles resulting in the loss of memory, confusion, impaired judgement, and behavior changes. Treatments focus on resolving abnormal cellular processes that are characteristic of the different stages of the disease.

- **Early stage:** research aims to develop treatments that block or clear beta-amyloid proteins, or "plaques," and reduce plaque accumulation.
- **Early to mid-stage:** research aims to develop treatments that block tau proteins, or "tangles," from forming, in order to protect neurons from stress.
- **Later stages of dementia:** research aims to develop treatments that fight inflammation and slow or stop the disease process.

Did you know?

Plaques are deposits of a protein fragment called beta-amyloid that build up in the spaces between nerve cells in the brain.

Tangles are twisted fibers of another protein called tau (rhymes with "wow") that build up inside brain cells.

Early Stage

Early to Mid-Stage

Mid to Late-Stage

Amyloid
Amyloid Beta Accumulation

Tangles
Neurofibrillary Tangles
Neuronal Cell Death

Inflammation
Reactive Microglia

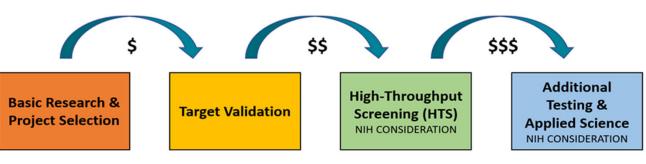# Bridging the Gap: Turning Today's Ideas into Tomorrow's Treatments

C4C focuses on supporting drug discovery projects in San Diego County by working to bridge the gap between academic research and the translation of the research findings into drug discovery and development.

To accomplish this, C4C puts out an annual Call for Proposals. Proposals must have a strong rationale or hypothesis that a "target" (i.e. specific gene or protein) is associated with dementia and can be analyzed in a laboratory setting to demonstrate the function of these targets. Projects that are selected gain funded access to state-of-the-art research equipment at either Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute or Scripps Research Institute.

On site researchers are able to put targets through series of tests such as High Throughput Screening (a screening system that lets you test a lot of molecule compounds in large quantities). Once projects have identified hits (specific interactions between targets and molecule compounds), they go through a series of robust tests to

be validated and for the purpose of collecting preliminary data. This robust preliminary data forms the basis of competitive submissions for translational Research Project Grants to the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for potential funding.

The goal of this vigorous translational research process is to provide support for efforts specific to identifying a cure for ADRD.

The research projects that go through the C4C process target all stages of Alzheimer's disease. Currently, there are six research projects moving through this process. There are two projects that are targeting the early accumulations of plaques; one project focused on inhibiting the formation of tangles; two focused on fighting inflammation; and one focused on a completely new target added in 2019.

| Basic Research & Project Selection | Target Validation | High-Throughput Screening (HTS) NIH CONSIDERATION | Additional Testing & Applied Science NIH CONSIDERATION |

C4C Updates and Outcomes

C4C selected two new projects to add to the pipeline in 2019, bringing the total C4C projects to 14 since inception in 2015. Six of these projects are currently in the pipeline process, as described on the previous page. The other eight projects have completed the C4C process by producing data that sheds light on whether particular targets are promising treatments for Alzheimer's disease.

As reported last year, one of the C4C projects led to a successful NIH grant award of $1.3 million and it is now in its second NIH project year. In 2019, four more projects were submitted to NIH for potential grant awards: one application was not funded, one application has not yet been reviewed, one $3 million grant is expected to be funded, and another application was funded in January 2020 for $1.7 million.

Looking Ahead: Collaboration4Cure

On January 10, 2020, C4C announced their 5th Call for Proposals. Each proposal will be undergoing a rigorous review by a panel of esteemed scientists and doctors to identify those that leverage collaboration and will benefit from the drug discovery capabilities and services of the Conrad Prebys Center for Chemical Genomics at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute. The announcement of selected drug discovery projects to be awarded C4C funding will take place later in 2020.

Clinical Roundtable

The Clinical Roundtable convenes medical professionals with various backgrounds from San Diego County in order to provide guidance and expertise regarding medical care for those living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD).

The Clinical Roundtable promotes best practices among primary care physicians who often are the ones conducting screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease.

By creating an awareness of resources, promoting standards and guidelines, and providing tools for effective communication, the Clinical Roundtable increases the capacity of primary care providers to effectively care for people living with ADRD and support their families and caregivers.

Creating Long-Term Meaningful Change in Hospitals

The *Physician Guidelines for Screening, Evaluation and Management of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias* (Physician Guidelines) were created in 2016 and updated in 2018 to assist primary care physicians in supporting those impacted by dementia. These guidelines established clinical standards of practice to improve patient care and outcomes. In 2019, four healthcare systems began incorporating the Physician Guidelines into their daily operations, creating meaningful systemic change. Through these systemic changes, the best practices found in the Physician Guidelines will be sustained for patients for years to come.

Kaiser Permanente changed their systemic practice to include a workflow in line with the Physician Guidelines within all primary care clinics in San Diego County. This means nurse practitioners and physician assistants were trained to conduct mental health and cognitive assessments (i.e., MiniCog, AD8, PHQ9, and MOCA tests). Rollout of the new protocols were piloted in East County clinic sites and are rolling out throughout the county, beginning in the central area.

Scripps Clinic's preliminary findings from a pilot study determined that use of the Physician Guidelines and standardized screening have significantly increased the number of patients diagnosed with appropriate ICD10 codes (codes used by doctors, health insurance companies, and public health agencies across the world to represent diagnoses). Scripps leadership is evaluating the data from the pilot study with the hopes of systemic adoption.

UCSD Geriatric Emergency Department (ED) has incorporated best practices from the Physician Guidelines, and now encourages referrals to an ED primary care provider, instead of a neurologist. This department has also added distinct fields into their electronic health record for screening instrument scores, and these scores are now available to the patients' primary care providers. Primary care providers have systemically adopted the use of the screening instruments recommended in the Physician Guidelines.

Sharp Healthcare has adopted the Physician Guidelines as their standard for Continuing Medical Education (CME) training for their providers and has made these materials available to all providers on their internal training portal.
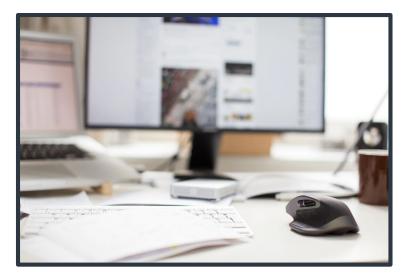
Utilizing Technology to Support Physician Best Practices

Resources Are Just a Click Away

A web platform was created to support medical professionals to gain access to resources related to ADRD. These resources include:

- An updated version of the Physician Guidelines which now encompasses how to care for those with ADRD.
- Electronic version of exam room posters to prompt patients to ask their physicians about cognitive impairment.
- Tools and guidance for physicians on evaluation, screening, and disease management.
- A reference guide on state and local ADRD resources to support caregivers.

AlzDxRx: Information at Your Fingertips

AlzDxRx is a mobile app that was created based on the Physician Guidelines and puts resources into the hands of providers. This app allows users to access seven different screening and evaluation instruments, reference the common warning signs of dementia, and much more. More than 450 providers utilized this app in 2019, almost double the users since 2018, when the app had 234 users.

AlzDxRx
DOWNLOAD & INSTALL

Alzheimer's

Preparing Providers for the Evolving Needs of Patients

It is critical that physicians have the most up-to-date information and tools to support them in caring for those with ADRD. The Clinical Roundtable utilizes a multi-faceted approach to ensure the information has broad reach. These efforts include tapping into Grand Rounds (presentations for doctors, residents, and medical students), coordinating presentations, and speaking at conferences.

Most recently, the Clinical Roundtable participated in the 20th Annual Sharp Community Medical Group Conference and a UCSD neurologic conference to share best practices in screening and treatment of ADRD. Additionally, presentation materials were prepared for the Kaiser Permanente Neurology Department to be incorporated into a training of primary care providers. The six training events in 2019 provided education to 437 providers.

Let's Talk About Dementia

To encourage individuals to advocate for their own brain health, the Clinical Roundtable developed posters with messaging related to dementia, prompting patients and caregivers to talk to their doctor if they have concerns.

A total of 14,200 exam room posters (of which half were in English and half in Spanish) were mailed to all physician offices and community clinic sites in the region.

Looking Ahead: Clinical Care

An assessment was completed with ED staff, and two specific recommendations were identified:
- Improve and standardize training of the Basic Life Support level certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) on cognitive assessment, determination of delirium, and behavioral management of individuals with dementia, and explore development of training requirements for EMT certification.
- Partner with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and the West Foundation to provide/enhance training for ED staff on disease and symptom identification, cognitive assessment, determination of delirium, and behavioral management, in conjunction with efforts for accreditation of ED as senior friendly.

Care Roundtable

Many people living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) are cared for at home by family members. This can be a very demanding and stressful role to take on, which is why it is imperative to provide tools and resources to caregivers.

The purpose of the Care Roundtable is to strengthen the network of services available to people living with ADRD, their families, and caregivers in San Diego County. The roundtable is made up of local health care providers, experts in dementia, family caregivers, residential and day care providers, representatives from the public safety sector, and community organizations who work together to collaborate and improve the system of care for people living with dementia, their families, and caregivers.

♥ Respite Voucher Program

Caregiving can be demanding. Respite care can help by providing the opportunity for caregivers to take a break, rest, and re-charge while their loved one's needs are met. At the suggestion of the Care Roundtable, the County of San Diego (County) now offers affordable respite services to help give caregivers of those living with dementia a much-needed break. The program is built on a cost-sharing model whereby the County pays 50% of the cost of services and the caregiver pays the other 50%.

The service is offered in partnership with two providers: Coast Care Partners and Southern Caregiver Resource Center. Each provider offers similar pricing and respite options, such as home care, adult daycare, and short stays at local assisted living centers.

In 2019, 912 clients were served and a total of 55,109 hours of respite were provided.

Need Help?

The Alzheimer's Project "Need Help?" Webpage: A new 'Need Help?' tab on The Alzheimer's Project website has been developed specifically for caregivers and those living with ADRD in San Diego County. The tab includes information and resources for a variety of services, such as lifetime planning, respite care, safety, and dementia education.

Visit www.sdalzheimersproject.org to learn more and get connected.

Improving Dementia Capability Through FIRST

With the growing number of older adults living with ADRD, more organizations are looking to increase dementia capability, or the degree to which their programs, services, and staff are able to help people with dementia and their caregivers.

Through the FIRST (First Identify and Refer, then Serve and Track) project, funded by the federal Administration for Community Living, Aging & Independence Services (AIS) has been working to increase the dementia capability within the agency and among other community organizations. FIRST began enrollment in October 2018 and is comprised of a variety of components, including a case management program, behavioral symptom management training, screening for dementia, and a respite voucher program.

Case management services are available to individuals with memory concerns who live alone, as well as to caregivers who live with someone with moderate to severe dementia. Those living with dementia are offered support with services such as home care and life planning.

Caregivers receive respite care and training on how to manage challenging behaviors that may result as a care recipient's dementia progresses.

As of December 2019, over 100 individuals and families had been served by the program. Resources that are developed and lessons learned from these dementia-specific case management activities are being shared with other agency programs, including the Alzheimer's Response Team (ART).

Improving Dementia Capability Through FIRST (cont.)

In addition, FIRST is shaping our agency's practices regarding screening for dementia with the creation of new protocols, staff training, and resource materials. All Adult Protective Services (APS) and new In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) clients who meet specific criteria are now screened for dementia using the Mini-Cog or AD-8 instruments. Follow-up with a doctor is encouraged when results indicate cognitive difficulties.

AIS social workers and representatives from other community organizations have received training on IDEA (Identify, Educate, and Adapt), a method for caregivers to log behaviors, identify triggers, and modify the environment to ease behavioral symptoms associated with dementia. Staff and community partners are equipped to share the concepts and tools of IDEA with caregivers they encounter in a variety of programs.

Finally, FIRST includes a respite care voucher program. Offered in partnership with Alzheimer's San Diego, the ReCharge program provides a limited amount of home care or adult daycare at no cost to support caregivers with a reprieve from their duties. A program manual with lessons learned and best practices will be shared with other organizations, so it can be replicated.

> *"I was struggling with the intensity of caring for my mom and all of the medical and family dynamics. I grabbed hold of all of your resources. I found your help with free caregivers was a ray of hope at a time when the stress of caring for my mom at our home was becoming unbearable."*
>
> *-FIRST Client*

Alzheimer's Response Team (ART): Pilot Program Shows Promise

People living with ADRD who experience a crisis are sometimes taken to a hospital or to jail when there may be a better course of action. The ART pilot project was launched following approval from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in December 2017. It was developed through a partnership between the County Health and Human Services Agency, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Alzheimer's San Diego, Sharp Grossmont Hospital, and the Grossmont Healthcare District, and was conducted in the areas served by the Santee Sheriff's Station.

The ART program has two components: crisis prevention and crisis response. To address prevention, first responders have been trained on how to communicate and interact with people with dementia. Also in 2019, the Caregiver Coalition of San Diego's Caregiver Handbook was updated to include a section on ADRD.
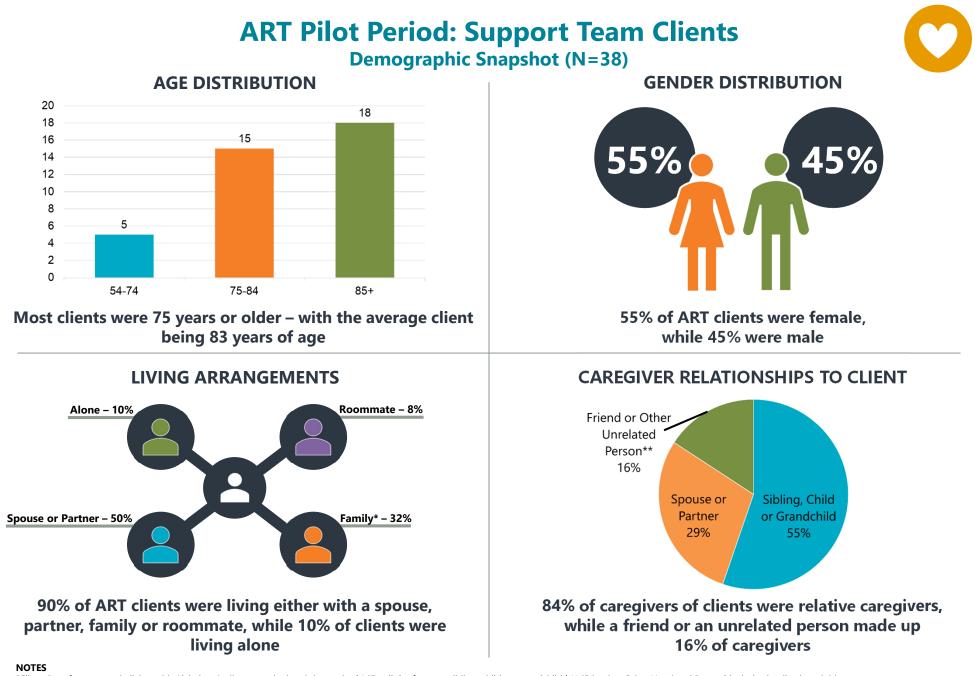
The crisis response component includes a dedicated phone line for ART referrals, short-term crisis response, and additional social work support for up to six months, as appropriate. Calls from first responders or other professionals come through the AIS Call Center, which are triaged by trained County APS staff, and referrals are made to an APS social worker on the ART-Crisis Response Team. This team performs an initial visit to address the person and their caregiver's immediate needs. Then all families are referred to the ART-Support Team, which consists of an APS social worker and a dementia specialist from Alzheimer's San Diego, a local non-profit that provides resources and support to caregivers of those with ADRD.

At a Glance:
Pilot Study Outcomes
(June 2018 - June 2019)

- **84** total calls received
- **73** calls resulted in visit by the Crisis Response Team for intervention
- **40** cases referred to ART-Support Team for ongoing support

ART Pilot Period: Support Team Clients
Demographic Snapshot (N=38)

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Most clients were 75 years or older – with the average client being 83 years of age

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

55% 45%

55% of ART clients were female, while 45% were male

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Alone – 10%
Roommate – 8%
Spouse or Partner – 50%
Family* – 32%

90% of ART clients were living either with a spouse, partner, family or roommate, while 10% of clients were living alone

CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS TO CLIENT

Friend or Other Unrelated Person** 16%

Spouse or Partner 29%

Sibling, Child or Grandchild 55%

84% of caregivers of clients were relative caregivers, while a friend or an unrelated person made up 16% of caregivers

NOTES
"Clients" - refers to people living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias | * "Family" refers to a sibling, child, or grandchild | ** "Friend or Other Unrelated Person" includes landlords, neighbors, etc.
Prepared by: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Community Health Statistics Unit, 2019.
Source: County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services, Adult Protective Services, 6/4/18-6/4/19.

ART – Helping to Stabilize Residents with Alzheimer's and Their Families

Dementia can be challenging for both the person living with the disease and their caregivers. Residents served by the ART program report that support team involvement brought much needed stability to their family. For instance, one senior served by the program had been living with dementia for years, and although the disease had progressed to the point where he needed help caring for himself, he was not happy that his family had moved in to provide care. On the other hand, the family was stressed by the senior's behaviors, including anger, disorientation, frustration, agitation, paranoia, and wandering. The senior had repeatedly declined to attend doctors' appointments and take medication, which further exacerbated these behaviors. A concerned professional called ART.

After the initial ART-Crisis Response Team visit, the ART-Support Team worked with the senior and his family for six months. Critical to this case was ART's focus on establishing rapport and gaining the trust of the senior and the family members. They provided education about common behaviors, disease symptom management, techniques on how to interact with a person with dementia, how to encourage the senior to take medications, and guidance on how to get him to attend doctors' appointments. The team also stressed to the family the importance of taking care of themselves.

Assistance by the ART-Support Team helped to connect the senior and his family to community resources and health services. The senior now has a primary care provider and is regularly attending medical appointments and taking prescribed medications. He was approved for Medi-Cal and enrolled in a program which provides all-inclusive care for case management, socialization, medical care, and transportation. The senior has even allowed the ART worker to take a picture of him and enroll him in the Take Me Home Program. The family now feels confident in their ability to continue caring for their loved one, and the situation is now stable.

Please note that components from this story have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

Supporting Seniors in Crisis: ART Expands Reach

The ART pilot program has proven to be an important and necessary support for those who were served. In an effort to reach more San Diegans, the ART Program is expanding through partnerships with the La Mesa and Escondido Police Departments and the continued support of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. The program has expanded to the areas served by the Sheriff Department's Rancho San Diego station, which includes Imperial Beach and Lemon Grove. All three law enforcement agencies and fire department personnel have been trained on ART. This ensures officers are not only aware of the program, but understand how it works and when to use it, so they can further support the communities they serve that are impacted by ADRD.

Local Program Helps Bring Loved Ones Back Home

People living with ADRD experience challenges with memory and can become disoriented. According to the Alzheimer's Association, six out of ten people with dementia will wander. To address this concern, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department developed the Take Me Home Program.

The Take Me Home Program was launched in 2010 and established a registry that includes valuable information about a person with disabilities that law enforcement can access in case of emergency. Anyone who has a cognitive disability that affects their ability to communicate is eligible to join the registry. Those living with a cognitive disability can register themselves or have a caregiver do so for them. The registry includes demographic information, emergency contact details, and a feature in which a photograph of the person can be uploaded.

When law enforcement encounters someone with dementia who appears to be lost or disoriented, the officer can use the registry to look up information and contact the identified emergency contact. Currently, about 3,000 people are enrolled in the program, of which approximately 1,200 have been identified as having dementia. Law enforcement reports that the registry significantly reduces the time it takes to reunite the lost person with their loved ones.

Caregiver Coalition of San Diego Provides Support Near and Far
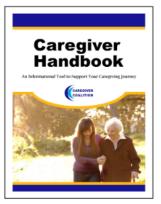
Adding to the Caregiver Toolbox

The Caregiver Coalition of San Diego (Coalition) helps to support family caregivers by providing education, training, and linkages to local services. It hosts several conferences and events for family caregivers throughout the year, such as the "Pathway to Mindful Caregiving" respite event which was held in May 2019. Other past events have focused on caring for veterans and mental health concerns.

Many caregivers find it difficult to leave the house for extended periods due to their role. To improve access, the Coalition provides free online resources, such as webinars. In 2019, the Coalition hosted six webinars, with topics ranging from effective communication to the benefits of Alzheimer's research. Past webinars are archived on the Coalition website (www.caregivercoalitionsd.org) and can be viewed at any time.

Sharing Resources

One of the Coalition's most significant accomplishments in 2019 was the creation of the *Caregiver Handbook: An Informational Tool to Support Your Caregiving Journey* (Caregiver Handbook). It includes a section focused on Alzheimer's disease, which addresses diagnosis, stages of Alzheimer's, behaviors and triggers, communication tips, and safety considerations.

Available in print and on the Coalition's website, the handbook has garnered national attention. The Coalition was approached by a caregiver organization from Northeast Florida that requested access to the handbook's template. The Coalition shared the content and granted permission for the handbook to be adapted to include resources relevant to Florida.

Looking Ahead: Care Roundtable

The Caregiver Handbook will be translated into four additional languages in San Diego County (Arabic, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese). Translated versions of the Caregiver Handbook will be disseminated to social workers within the County, community organizations, and the public.

Public Awareness & Education

Community partners, in conjunction with the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Aging & Independence Services (AIS), lead the charge to educate the public and provide comprehensive information about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) to the community.

The purpose of this group is to increase public and professional awareness of ADRD, and equip the community with the resources and skills to support San Diegans living with ADRD and their caregivers. Countywide efforts include face-to-face presentations at numerous community sites and events, and the development and distribution of various resources. Topics include brain health, the warning signs of dementia, supports for caregivers, and dementia-friendly communication techniques.

Live Well Advance Conference Sheds Light on Dementia

On October 28, 2019, the County HHSA brought together more than 1,600 current and prospective *Live Well San Diego* partners and stakeholders for the annual Live Well Advance, themed "Uniting for Impact". The conference provides a space to network and learn about tools and best practices that support the vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This year, the conference hosted a breakout session on dementia. The presentation titled "Everyone's Business: Cultivating Dementia-Friendly Service Delivery" was led by Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFS) and focused on their agency's journey towards becoming a dementia capable system of long-term services and supports. JFS has been measuring change in their capability over time by utilizing the National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center's Dementia Capability Assessment Tool. Examples of a dementia-capable system include: offering specialized training to staff and volunteers on cognitive impairment and dementia care; increasing client education; and providing recreational activities tailored for people with cognitive impairment.

The Live Well Advance also included two interactive displays showcasing brain health exercises and age-related sensory activities. St. Paul's Senior Services hosted a booth with an interactive online brain training program, exercising and challenging participants' cognitive function. Southern Caregiver Resource Center hosted a set of activities demonstrating various ways senses may change as one ages (e.g., yellowing in the vision and development of cataracts). The focus on dementia showcases the importance of helping those with ADRD and their caregivers to live well.

Vital Aging Conference Shares Ways to Take Care of Your Brain Health

AIS hosts an annual conference for older adults and professionals to promote healthy living and explore timely topics in the field of aging. On June 19, 2019, over 2,300 older adults and professionals attended Vital Aging 2019: Live Well to Age Well. The conference was held at two locations: the San Diego Convention Center and the California Center for the Arts, Escondido. Attendees enjoyed the keynote presentation featuring Marilu Henner, the New York Times best-selling author, actress, producer,

and long-time advocate for healthier living. The keynote presentation was telecast to the Escondido location. Both sites offered a variety of workshops on subjects such as brain health, fitness, and caregiving, as well as access to dozens of community resources. In Escondido, Alzheimer's Association - San Diego/Imperial Chapter discussed challenges with early detection, benefits of timely diagnosis, and what to expect at a doctor's visit when being evaluated for memory and thinking problems. At the San Diego Convention Center, Alzheimer's San Diego shared information and strategies to promote brain health. These sessions were among the most popular topics at both conference sites.

Communities Unite to Support People Living with Dementia

In an effort to support age-friendly and dementia-friendly communities, a committed group of local organizations and individuals came together to form the Dementia-Friendly Team. The team works together to identify opportunities to improve the quality of life for San Diegans living with dementia and their caregivers through dementia-friendly practices. Led by JFS and County staff, the workgroup now consists of a wide array of organizations with nearly 100 individuals on the distribution list, including local experts in ADRD, caregivers, and service providers. In 2019, the team promoted the Dementia Friends program countywide, which increases public awareness of dementia and its impact on people as well as promotes community-based supports that enable and empower residents living with dementia to remain independent for as long as possible.

On January 23, 2019, 25 County staff, community members, and representatives from various organizations, completed a training to serve as Dementia Friends Champions. Following the training, Champions led a total of nine sessions across the region at various events and locations. A total of 158 community members and professionals took part in 60-minute sessions to become Dementia Friends, learning about dementia and ways to support those who are impacted by dementia, such as signs and symptoms of dementia and communication tips on interacting with those living with dementia.

New Dementia Friends Share What They Learned

> " I learned that even a simple task can be very difficult for a person with dementia and that we need to be more patient and understanding. "

> " There is support, I'm not alone. "

> " I liked that I was able to relate, and I can use this information with my grandma. "

Local Efforts Align with National Initiative

Healthy Brain Initiative

In 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national Alzheimer's Association, the National Institute on Aging, and the federal Administration on Aging convened a multidisciplinary Steering Committee made up of experts representing both public and private sectors to examine the current knowledge on cognitive health. With the intention to integrate this area of focus into public health efforts, they developed the first set of recommendations for public health agencies to address cognitive health.

Now in its third iteration, the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map 2018-2023 offers recommendations including data collection to understand ADRD prevalence and trends, education of the clinical and public health workforce, and promotion of brain health to reduce the risk of dementia.

Learning Collaborative

The County HHSA is currently participating in a year-long learning collaboration with the national Alzheimer's Association designed to further develop and advance Healthy Brain Initiative goals at the local level. HHSA is one of two local health departments (along with the Boston Public Health Commission) hand-selected to participate, due in part to the excellent work done by The Alzheimer's Project. The Alzheimer's Association convened this collaboration to gather lessons learned and highlight best practices to inspire other local health departments to pursue similar work.
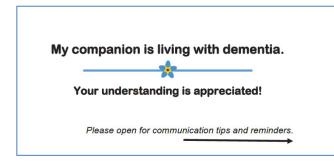
New Local Grant:
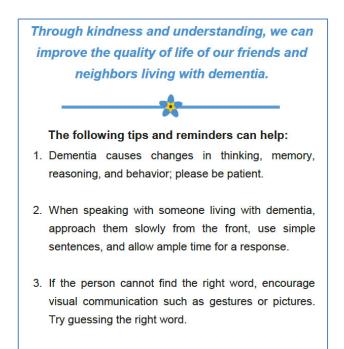
HHSA recently applied for and was awarded a $750,000 grant from the California Department of Public Health to advance Healthy Brain Initiative goals. The new grant, started in July 2020, will build upon The Alzheimer's Project and support the goals in the Roadmap for Aging in San Diego County (Aging Roadmap). The grant goals include: 1) develop an updated prevalence estimate for ADRD in our region; 2) integrate ADRD into local public health planning; 3) develop tools for clinicians to educate patients about brain health and cognitive impairment; 4) raise awareness of the risk of abuse for individuals with dementia; 5) educate caregivers on dementia resources; and 6) work with health systems to implement sustainable policies and procedures for best practices in clinical care.

Tools for Better Communication

One of the challenges of keeping those living with dementia engaged in their community is that their ability to communicate may be limited, making social interactions difficult. The Dementia-Friendly Team recently developed communication tip cards for caregivers to use when they are in the community with a companion with dementia. The card has tips and reminders on how to engage with a person with dementia. Those living with dementia benefit when others interacting with them understand their challenges and approach them with patience and kindness.

Through kindness and understanding, we can improve the quality of life of our friends and neighbors living with dementia.

The following tips and reminders can help:

1. Dementia causes changes in thinking, memory, reasoning, and behavior; please be patient.

2. When speaking with someone living with dementia, approach them slowly from the front, use simple sentences, and allow ample time for a response.

3. If the person cannot find the right word, encourage visual communication such as gestures or pictures. Try guessing the right word.

4. When all else fails, a friendly smile goes a long way.

My companion is living with dementia.

Your understanding is appreciated!

Please open for communication tips and reminders. ➡

Looking Ahead: Public Awareness and Education

The Dementia-Friendly Team will focus on:
- Continuing to promote dementia-friendly practices in the community by increasing awareness around ADRD.
- Developing a Dementia-Friendly Activities Toolkit, which will contain engaging and stimulating leisure activities for people living with ADRD.

Aging Roadmap – A Vision for Healthy Aging
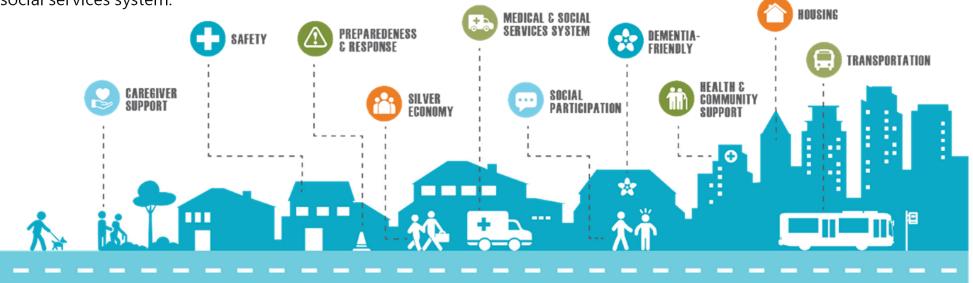
The Aging Roadmap is San Diego County's regional vision and framework for supporting healthy aging for people of all ages. In 2016, the County began the journey to become both an age-friendly and a dementia-friendly community. Through a community-led process, five areas were selected as priorities: health & community support, housing, social participation, transportation, and dementia-friendly. For each area, the community created a vision and goals, and identified key action steps to accomplish each goal. These are outlined in the County's Age Well San Diego Action Plan.

Building upon the Age Well San Diego Action Plan, in September 2019, the Aging Roadmap was launched to provide a comprehensive regional plan that includes five additional domains: caregiver support, safety, *preparedness & response, silver economy, and medical & social services system*.

Together, the ten focus areas collectively represent the County's comprehensive approach to aging services, including person-centered care and community-wide efforts. The complete Aging Roadmap is available at: www.livewellsd.org/agingroadmap.

The Aging Roadmap emphasizes important partnerships, both in government and the broader community, and aligns with our County's *Live Well San Diego* vision of a region that is healthy, safe, and thriving.

A regional framework is critical to guide efforts to meet the needs of older adults, including providing care and support, affordable housing, accessible transportation, and opportunities to work and volunteer. Engaging older adults is essential, as our communities can benefit from their wealth of expertise and experience.

San Diego Senior Emergency Care Initiative: Improving Emergency Care Services for Older Adults

A trip to the emergency department is stressful for people of all ages, but it can be especially difficult for older adults who may be experiencing cognitive challenges. Thanks to a public-private partnership involving the non-profit West Health, the County, and the region's major health systems, the majority of San Diego County's emergency departments are focusing on the needs of seniors and are seeking to achieve Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) by 2021.

Emergency departments that commit to becoming GEDA accredited offer care that is tailored to the unique needs of the over-60 population, including those living with dementia. The physical environment may be modified to offer softer lighting, better access to restrooms, lower beds that are easier to get out of, and access to walkers or other specialized equipment. In addition, new senior-specific protocols are added, such as assessing patients' mobility and the effects of multiple medications that a patient may be taking.

The extra level of care makes for a better experience for patients and helps support their recovery. In 2017, UC San Diego Health became the first local health system in San Diego County to receive GEDA accreditation at their Gary and Mary West Senior Emergency Care Unit. Initial research through UC San Diego Health found that senior-specific emergency care resulted in a 12 percent decrease in the risk of a patient coming back to the emergency department within 30 days and a 20 percent decrease in their rate of hospital admission. In 2018, Alvarado Hospital Medical Center's Senior Care Specialty Services Department opened a geriatric psychiatric unit that also achieved GEDA accreditation. This unit is staffed with doctors and nurses trained to provide cognitive, emotional, and behavioral care to adults 65 and older in a secure 24/7 inpatient setting.

Most importantly, staff receive special training to assess patients' needs beyond the acute issue that landed them in the emergency department. Staff ensure that necessary services, such as transportation, are in place to allow patients to attend follow-up medical appointments. They also determine if other basic needs are being met, such as nutritional and social needs.

In September of 2019, with the approval of the Aging Roadmap, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors directed County staff to work with community and hospital partners on achieving GEDA accreditation at all hospitals throughout the San Diego County. On December 9th, local healthcare leaders pledged to join the San Diego Senior Emergency Care Initiative, a first-of-its-kind, public-private commitment by local health systems. The initiative, funded with grants and support from the County and West Health Institute, makes San Diego County poised to be the first county in the nation to offer GEDA accredited care for older adults across the region.

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Collaboration4Cure

www.alzsd.org/resources/san-diego-research/collaboration4cure/

The Alzheimer's Project

www.sdalzheimersproject.org

Data on Alzheimer's in San Diego County

www.sdhealthstatistics.com

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

WWW.SDALZHEIMERSPROJECT.ORG