

STATE PRIORITIES 2011

Alzheimer's disease is a pivotal public health issue, and state governments stand on the front line. States must take bold action to confront this epidemic now.

1. Develop a comprehensive state government Alzheimer's disease plan

State Alzheimer's Disease Plans create the infrastructure and accountability necessary to confront the sweeping economic and social impact of this disease. By bringing together essential stakeholders – such as state agency officials, legislators, care providers, family caregivers, and people with Alzheimer's – the state planning process is able to identify critical issues, explore solutions, and construct a roadmap to guide a state's development into a dementia-capable state.

2. Improve the quality of dementia care

To best serve those with Alzheimer's, states should have a quality dementia care policy in place that includes the following key elements:

- Mandatory dementia training for direct care workers, regardless of care setting
- Disclosure by facilities of a consumer's dementia care service options
- Home and community based services that allow people with Alzheimer's to remain at home
- Effective enforcement of dementia care regulations

States also must ensure that their policies on advance directives and care planning reduce the complexity of end-of-life decision-making. One important action is to enact the budget-neutral Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act (UAGPPJA), which establishes a framework for courts in different states to communicate about adult guardianship cases.

3. Ensure access to Medicaid coverage for Alzheimer's

While Medicaid spending constitutes one of the largest items in most state budgets – and while most states continue to face severe fiscal constraints – critical benefits must be preserved. People with Alzheimer's need a Medicaid system that:

- Evaluates cognitive functioning when determining eligibility for long-term care
- Offers home and community based services, such as adult day care, hospice, and respite care
- Employs providers and care coordinators who are trained to understand Alzheimer's disease