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ASSOCIATION**



**SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2023**

# **X** ERA OF **TREATMENT**



# NEW ERA OF ALZHEIMER'S TREATMENT MEANS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP

As researchers are making huge strides in the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, Alzheimer's Association volunteers are working just as hard to ensure that the public has access to these findings—including making medications more affordable—as well as the resources and help they need when dealing with the disease.

Volunteers take on many roles from community educators who help people learn more about the disease, to advocates that urge politicians to make dementia research and care a priority. Additionally, volunteers can facilitate support groups, join Walk to End Alzheimer's committees or participate in clinical trials. Without these volunteers, the Alzheimer's Association wouldn't be able to serve as many people as it does; remove the stigma surrounding the disease, or continue to increase awareness of this growing public health emergency.

"With so many potential new treatments in the pipeline, educating communities about the risk of the disease, as well as providing information and support to those living with it, is so important—especially in those communities with more health disparities," said Sara Murphy, vice-president, programs and services, Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter. "Underrepresented and underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia, and yet are less likely to be diagnosed, have access to care and support or participate in clinical trials" says Murphy.

"We know that the most effective way to do this is in partnership with amazing volunteer educators because 95 percent of the education we provide is delivered by volunteers in the communities where they live, play, and pray. We couldn't reach people or increase awareness without them—they are trusted key messengers of vital information and at the core of what we do."

Community educators provide information on everything from the top 10 signs of the disease, to where to find support, to answering disease-specific questions. They also share risk-reduction strategies, providing advice on ways to take care of people's brains as they age.

"It's so important to be able to talk about early detection and understanding what normal memory loss is like compared to what is not normal," said Murphy. "It's also important to meet people where they are, understanding that in some communities, there is such a stigma about the disease."

Laura Huth, EdD, MOT, OTR/L, an assistant professor in the occupational therapy program at Carlow University, recently became a community educator for the Alzheimer's Association. "I've only done one presentation so far, and I think it went really well," she said. "The topic was dealing with difficult behaviors, and I think that the participants left understanding where those behaviors were coming from—that loved ones

were acting the way they were because their brains had changed.

"It helps to take the sting out when your husband, who has the disease, says terrible things," she said. "It helps caregivers to understand that it has nothing to do with them, and everything to do with the way the person's brain is not working."

In addition to working as Alzheimer's Association community educators, volunteers can also serve as support group facilitators or community representatives who help to increase awareness of the association's programs at health expos, faith-based facilities and more.

"The community needs to understand that this is a public health crisis; not just an aging issue," said Murphy. "The impact is large and the burden is great, but there are ways to intervene."

Reaching out to an audience that can make a big difference—both in public policy and through financial means—requires volunteers who are willing to share their stories with those who hold the state and the nation's purse strings—politicians on both sides of the aisle.



JEN EBERSOLE

"Our volunteer advocates are the linchpin in moving public policy forward," said Jen Ebersole, director of state government affairs, Alzheimer's Association of Greater Pennsylvania. "By raising their voices, sharing their stories, educating federal and state lawmakers about the impact that Alzheimer's has

had on them, their families and their communities, they encourage lawmakers to support public policies that can benefit us all."

Volunteer advocates participate in efforts year-round that include meeting with legislators and their staff, writing letters to the editor, and engaging in social media in a variety of ways to spread the word. The Alzheimer's Association also holds two signature events each year: the AIM Advocacy Forum in Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania Advocacy Day.

"The AIM (Alzheimer's Impact Movement) Advocacy Forum brings advocates from across the country to DC, where they lend support to each other while taking their voices to Capitol Hill to advocate to Congress," said Ebersole. "There's nothing like seeing that sea of purple descending on the nation's capital."

Maya Francisco, a junior at Allegheny College, was recently afforded the opportunity to participate at the annual forum in DC. She first got involved with the Alzheimer's Association after losing her father to the disease.

1 in 3

seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia



MAYA FRANCISCO

"I was super excited and super nervous to be able to talk to my Congressman and his office staff as well as to meet advocates from all 50 states," said Francisco, who also created a field hockey Purple Game in her father's honor. "While everyone had a unique story, we all carry the same feeling that something was taken away from us.

"I really couldn't have asked for more," she added. "Being in my 20s, it was helpful to be able to meet those who were older and who had more life experience and could give me advice on how to continue this grieving process," she said. "It never stops, but you can get better, and doing these things—like going to Washington—makes you feel like you can make a change. I can't tell you how much it means to me that there is an organization that not only wants to advocate on behalf of people with the disease, but that also includes such a wide range of participants."

Similar to the forum in DC, advocates travel to Harrisburg during Pennsylvania Advocacy Day to meet with legislators and share stories of how the disease has affected them—as well as how it could affect Pennsylvania constituents. This year's event will take place on June 5.

"This year, our biggest state policy priority is to advocate for the creation of public health infrastructure in order to address Alzheimer's as a growing public health issue," said Ebersole. Sen. Rosemary Brown of Northeast Pennsylvania will be leading the association's efforts, introducing legislation to address and mobilize efforts to combat Alzheimer's disease the same way that the state addresses other chronic diseases. The Association will also be asking for a \$750,000 state appropriation to support this public health infrastructure.

On the federal level, AIM will be addressing the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) refusal to cover any current or future anti-amyloid MAB treatments, both with CMS and the Biden administration.

"When you work in policy and advocacy, the significance of what happens when we are successful in passing policy is amazing; the end result truly impacts masses of people," said Ebersole. "When you talk about the need to move our mission forward and to change the trajectory of the disease, the work that our volunteers do in policy and advocacy is instrumental in that."

# PITTSBURGH HAS GLOBAL REACH AS HUB OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH

As research into Alzheimer's disease and other dementias enters a new era of treatment, Pittsburgh is at the forefront of developing new treatments and technologies to help those currently suffering from the disease, while continuing in the search to find a cure.

In order to spur this research and continuing decades of local funding, the Alzheimer's Association is currently investing approximately \$1.6 million in active grants at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry, the School of Public Health and the Center for Neuroscience, where researchers are breaking new ground in the study of biomarkers as well as exploring new targets for drug treatment.



SARA MURPHY

Pittsburgh is also home to Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC), a federally funded center that serves as an umbrella for numerous dementia research studies as well as clinical trials. One area that helps support Alzheimer's research at the ADRC is funding provided by the

National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Alzheimer's Association and their advocates have helped provide a tremendous boost in federal funding. Funding for NIH Alzheimer's research has continued to increase; in 2022, the NIH funded \$3.4 billion to further Alzheimer's research into the disease compared to \$631 million in 2015 - an increase of 438 percent.

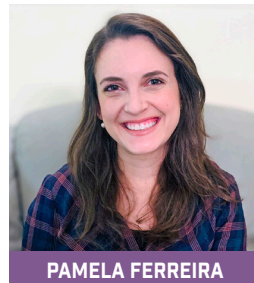
As a result, researchers from around the world are flocking to the Steel City to participate in this scientific hotbed, working together to come up with the latest advancements and innovations in Alzheimer's research.

## ATTRACTING GLOBAL TALENT

"It's really exciting; a big part of what we're seeing happening in Pittsburgh is that biomarkers are really

changing the game," said Sara Murphy, vice-president, programs and services, Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter, of the biomarkers that can help determine if a person has Alzheimer's disease at earlier stages. "We use biomarkers to identify cholesterol and the risk for heart disease, as well as do blood tests for glucose to determine diabetes. Similar to that, we're looking at advancing this technology as a way to create blood tests that identify the biomarker that shows that a person may have Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

"Globally, this technology is very exciting, and it's being done right here in Pittsburgh," she added.

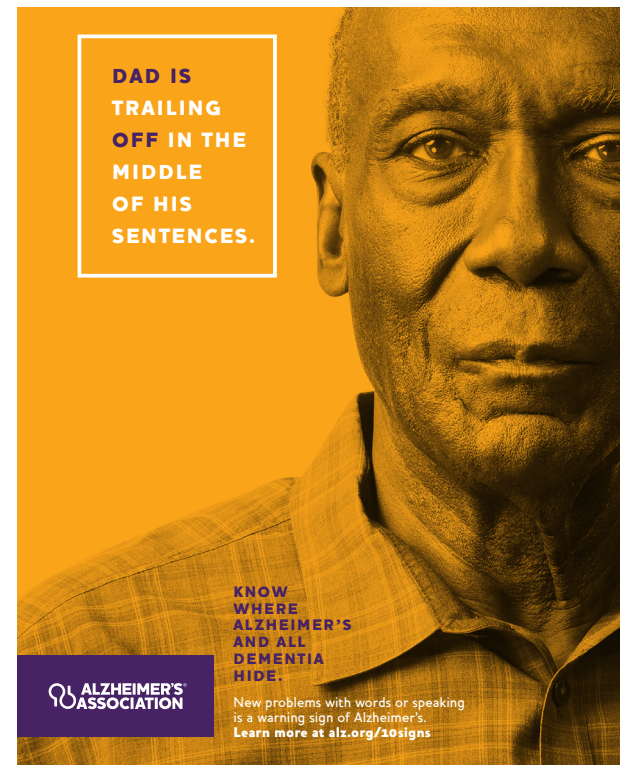


PAMELA FERREIRA

The city's reputation for Alzheimer's disease research reaches far and wide, and resulted in two young, innovative Brazilian researchers, Pamela Ferreira and Bruna Bellaver, coming here to work, and both receiving funding from the Alzheimer's Association's

International Research Grants Programs. Ferreira's research is focused on studying blood biomarkers in different populations to see if they perform the same way in different races or in people of different ethnicities.

"Most of the biomarker studies that have been done are based on populations in Europe or North America, so we need to gain information about how biomarkers perform in populations in countries that are still developing," she said. "We're hoping that this improves diagnosis and enables us to propose blood biomarkers as a better screening tool for Alzheimer's disease." A second part of Ferreira's Alzheimer's Association funded study is evaluating how biomarkers perform in the real world when used to diagnose patients



BRUNA BELLAVER

who have not been part of a research cohort.

"In Brazil, we still don't have a technique to measure biomarkers, and here I get the opportunity to learn more about it," said Ferreira of her decision to do her research in Pittsburgh. "The city is known as the hub for Alzheimer's

research around the world, and it is also one of the most well-funded sites by the National Institutes of Health and the Alzheimer's Association; that brings a lot of people here."

These reasons are also why the Massaro Family Foundation is part of the funding for Dr. Ferreira's work, through a generous gift they made to help further this research. "We just want to make sure we are supporting Alzheimer's research in the Pittsburgh

GLOBAL REACH CONTINUED ON #9



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# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: A NEW ERA OF TREATMENT

The first survivor of Alzheimer's disease is out there, and every day, researchers are coming closer to ensuring that those who endure this devastating cognitive disorder and other dementias have all of the tools necessary to fight until that day comes. As researchers make new discoveries in areas ranging from blood and biomarker testing to provide an early & accurate diagnosis, to medications that can delay the progression of Alzheimer's disease by treating the underlying biology, there are many reasons for the Alzheimer's community to have hope.

"This is a particularly exciting time; what we've seen over the past decade is that investment in research and renewed interest in the field is coming to bear right now," said Clay Jacobs, executive director, Alzheimer's Association-Greater Pennsylvania Chapter. "Not only do we have the first FDA-approved treatments ever, but advancements in blood and biomarker tests are now able to provide earlier and more accurate diagnoses."



CLAY JACOBS

Jacobs noted that the largest risk reduction trial ever, US POINTER just finished enrollment, which could pave the way for people to lower their risk of developing dementia.

"We are truly in the midst of a historic period in Alzheimer's research," he added.

However, while the future looks bright in the research field, there is still much to be done. Making sure that the public has access to these new diagnostic tests as well as making newly approved medications—which are not covered by Medicare or Medicaid—affordable is a priority of the Alzheimer's Association. Tracking the results of these diagnostic tools and medications long-term is also key to understanding how to improve patients' prognosis.

## INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH

As more funds are invested in research and more

attention is brought to the disease, researchers have been able to make inroads that were out of reach before. In addition to an eightfold increase in researching funding from the federal government, the Alzheimer's Association has invested \$10 million in Pennsylvania alone to help spur innovation.

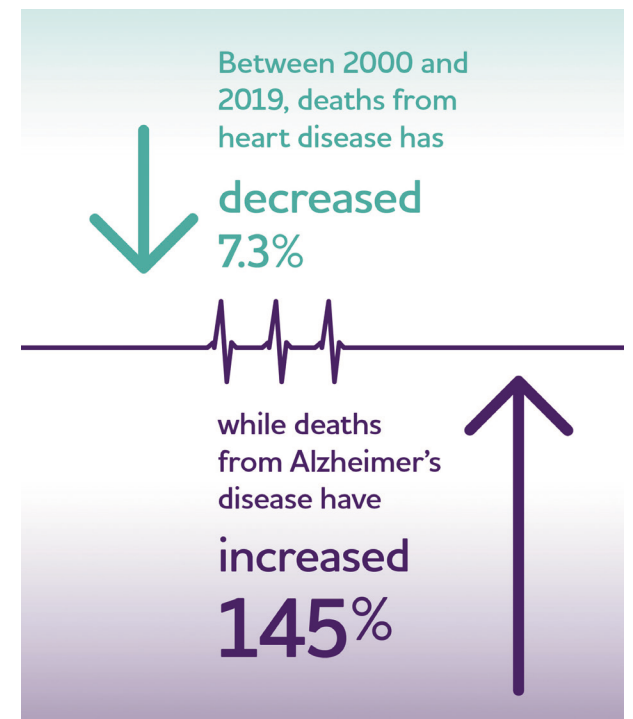
"This is a very hopeful time in research, because there isn't a disease that we've seen, with this type of attention and investment that hasn't had a sizable dent made in it," said Jacobs. "When you look at cancer and HIV/AIDS, for example, you can see the progress made through investments in research and public health interventions. We're hoping to finally see that type of progress for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia."

One of the more headline-attracting breakthroughs has been the introduction of two FDA-approved medications, Aduhelm (aducanumab) and Lequemi (lecanemab-irmb), which have been shown to help patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

"New treatments bring a lot of hope, and the result of these FDA-approved medications proves to us that we're on the right track—that we can change the course of the disease," said Tharick Pascoal, MD, PhD, is a neurologist and assistant professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. "In terms of effect, these medications show a reduction of 25-30 percent in cognitive decline in patients, which offers them a better quality of life. Now research is focused on the other 75 percent."

Researchers are also studying biomarkers in the body that allow them to identify the presence of a pathology, to determine if a person has Alzheimer's disease. "Alzheimer's is characterized by the presence of amyloid and tau pathology in the brain, which we can see with a PET scan, but biomarkers will allow us to identify these same pathologies through simple blood tests," said Dr. Pascoal.

He noted that currently, less than 50 percent of patients with dementia who visit a primary care physician and 30 percent of patients who visit a



specialist either receive a correct diagnosis or are given the specific cause of their dementia. "So if you have 100 people in a specialty clinic, at least 30 of them are not diagnosed correctly," said Dr. Pascoal. "Biomarkers won't replace the importance of a clinician but can enable a clinical assessment to have higher accuracy."



DR. THARICK PASCOAL

According to Dr. Oscar Lopez, MD, FAAN, director, University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC), inroads are being made in the study of Alzheimer's disease and dementia on every front.

"The field is very active at every level, from basic sciences to neurology to biomarkers to education," he said. "One of the reasons for this is because the number of people at risk is increasing—this is an imminent problem in our society."

NEW ERA CONTINUED ON #7



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# 24/7 HELPLINE PROVIDES ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT, INFORMATION



Being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or caring for someone with dementia is one of the most challenging things that a person can face. It raises all sort of questions, and it can feel isolating and frightening when you don't have any of the answers.

The Alzheimer's Association has created a 24/7 helpline that can help allay your fears and provide you with the information you need to make more informed decisions. Through this free service, specialists and master's-level clinicians offer support and information to people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public.

The helpline includes bilingual staff and interpreter services and can accommodate more than 200 languages.

When you call, you'll be able to speak confidentially about the issues that families face every day. You can learn about the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and find out about local programs and services available to help you or your loved one.

The helpline can also provide information about legal, financial and care decisions, as well as treatment options.

"The 24/7 Helpline is really at the core of how we support people and communities," said Sara Murphy, vice-president, programs and services, Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter. "We understand that those who are caregiving for a person with any form of dementia feel isolated and alone. We can provide a listening ear, as well as information and support no matter where your loved one is in the disease process.

"The Helpline is available in 200 different languages because we don't want language to be a barrier to people getting the help and support they need," she added.

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is available around the clock, 365 days a year. If you'd prefer to live chat via computer or request help online, visit <https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/helpline>.

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ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

# WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S, THE LONGEST DAY PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

There's nothing quite like seeing a sea of purple marching along city streets to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias, and that's the goal of the thousands of people who turn out every year to remember loved ones, share their stories, and raise money for research to achieve the vision of a world without Alzheimer's.

The year's Walk to End Alzheimer's in Pittsburgh will take place on Oct. 14, 2023, beginning at 9 a.m. at Highmark Stadium. The walk hopes to attract at least 4,000 walkers and to raise \$525,000.



SARA GIAMMARISE

"The walk is important because it is the largest fundraiser for research, care and support for people living with Alzheimer's disease," said Sara Giammarise, senior development director, Walk to End Alzheimer's, Alzheimer's Association. "We use the event not only to raise money, but to build

momentum behind the cause in order to help these families."

"At the walk, you're able to see how many people are impacted by Alzheimer's disease right in front of you," she added. "You see others who are connected to the disease like you are."

While the walk is a wonderful bonding experience, it is also a way to bring attention to this public health emergency. Promise garden flowers are carried by walkers with colors symbolizing their connection to the disease—blue flowers for those living with Alzheimer's; yellow flowers for caregivers; orange flowers for advocates; and purple flowers—the most common—for those who have lost a loved one to the disease.

One of the most positive aspects of this year's walk is that those participating have more reason to hope than ever, as research into the disease enters a new era of treatment. New medications, as well as research into better diagnostic testing, is helping move the needle forward as researchers search for a cure.

"As we enter this new era of treatment, we're seeing a lot of interest from individuals and companies around all of the new treatments being released," said Giammarise. "We're going through a sort of Renaissance in the way that we engage with supporters because people feel that they can see a light at the end of the tunnel. It is encouraging them to really get involved with our cause, and to make a lot of noise as a result of these advancements."

McKenna Gilbert first got involved with the walk in 2021, after a friend lost both of her grandparents to dementia. Though she had no direct connection to



MCKENNA GILBERT

the disease, she wanted to support her friend's family and what they had gone through as caregivers.

"As a first-year attendee, I went through every emotion there is," she said. "There's the joy of seeing the whole community come together to fight to end the disease, and

the sadness of the stories of those whose loved ones lost the battle. It really drives home why we do this."

Now the chair of the executive leadership committee for the walk, Gilbert reaches out to sponsors and other companies to provide support to the yearly event. "Our goal is to make this the biggest walk Pittsburgh has had to date and to let those who are suffering from the disease know that our community is standing with them; that they are not alone with this disease," she said.



CHRIS BRODMAN

Companies who want to get involved can help sponsor the walk, put together a team, volunteer at the race or man the mission tent, among other options. Attorney Chris Brodman has been involved with the Alzheimer's Association and the walk for more than eight years, though he's been touched by

the disease for much longer.

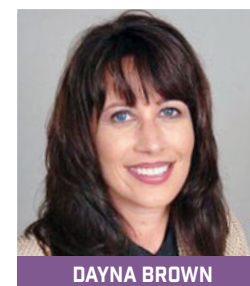
"My first personal experience with Alzheimer's was with my grandmother; I remember coming home from college after my first year and couldn't believe how, in a fairly short period of time, she had gone from having some memory issues to being completely incoherent," he said.

"As an adult, both of my wife's parents died of Alzheimer's and my wife was their primary caretaker,"

he added. "For the better part of 15 years, I watched her deal with that and watched her parents go through that terrible journey."

Brodman supports a walk team through his business, and his law firm has also sponsored the walk. He has served as a board member, vice chair and chairman of the board of the Alzheimer's Association, and as such, is cautiously optimistic about what this new era of treatment means.

"It gives me hope, for sure," he said. "But I will say that we need to be careful as an organization and as a society to not take our foot off the gas pedal because we feel that we've achieved something. To turn it into the reality we need, we need to push the pedal down even further and use this era of treatment to energize us to get to the next step—and then a cure."



DAYNA BROWN

## THE LONGEST DAY

In addition to the walk, there are many other ways that people can help raise money to fight the disease. The Longest Day, held every year on and around the summer solstice, lets individuals choose their own ways to fundraise.

Dayna Brown's mother passed away in 2017 from Alzheimer's disease, and the next year, she decided to go on a long-distance bike ride to see if she could garner support. Now in her sixth year of the ride, she was named a Solstice Champion for four consecutive years for raising

THE LONGEST DAY CONTINUED ON #11

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S OR THE LONGEST DAY, VISIT [ALZ.ORG/TLD](http://ALZ.ORG/TLD)



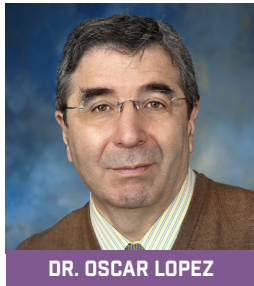
More than  
**6 million Americans**  
are living with Alzheimer's

**NEW ERA CONTINUED FROM #4**

ADRC serves as the umbrella for numerous dementia-related studies, including research into the relationship between the brain and the heart. They have been at the forefront of dementia science for decades and made a tremendous impact in Pennsylvania and globally. "We were the first group that found that arterial stiffness correlates to the position of amyloid in the brain," said Dr. Lopez, noting that some vascular issues can be treated with antihypertensives. "Knowing how vascular disease in the body affects the brain is important because it leads to the notion that if you keep your body in good health, the risk of dementia decreases. Not that it won't happen, but if it does, it will occur later."

**ACCESSIBILITY**

While researchers are coming up with improved tools for diagnosis and treatment, unfortunately, that does not mean they are readily available. These FDA-approved treatments are not being



**DR. OSCAR LOPEZ**

covered by Medicare or Medicaid; something that Jacobs says is unacceptable. "This is the first time that an FDA-approved medication

is not covered, which is utterly discriminatory; Alzheimer's patients having to mortgage their homes or take out loans is not health equity. We know that the cost of this treatment and future treatments will not be any different than those of other diseases, so we are advocating with Medicare and Medicaid now to cover the medications, and we hope private insurers catch up as well.

"You can't have a cure without the first treatment, and by making medications like this available to the larger public, improving diagnosis tools and educating more folks to support this research, the effects can be huge," he added. "That is why public understanding and engagement is so important to this work."

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# Supporting Family Caregivers



Life doesn't prepare anyone to be a caregiver for a person living with dementia. This leaves many caregivers feeling alone and unprepared by the challenges they face.

Every person living with dementia is impacted differently – including their caregivers and family members. This means getting answers and solutions for your situation is a very personal journey, a journey no one should have to go on alone.

Dementia360 can help.

Designed specifically for the family caregiver, the highly skilled Care Coordinators at Dementia360 provide the support, resources, connections, and ongoing coaching families need to keep people living with dementia at home – living comfortably and safely, for as long as possible.

Dementia360 helps families wherever they are on their journey to:

- Understand and accept a new dementia diagnosis
- Develop good habits to shape the disease as it progresses
- Overcome behavioral challenges
- Have a life that is better because they have the confidence, skills, and support to be successful.

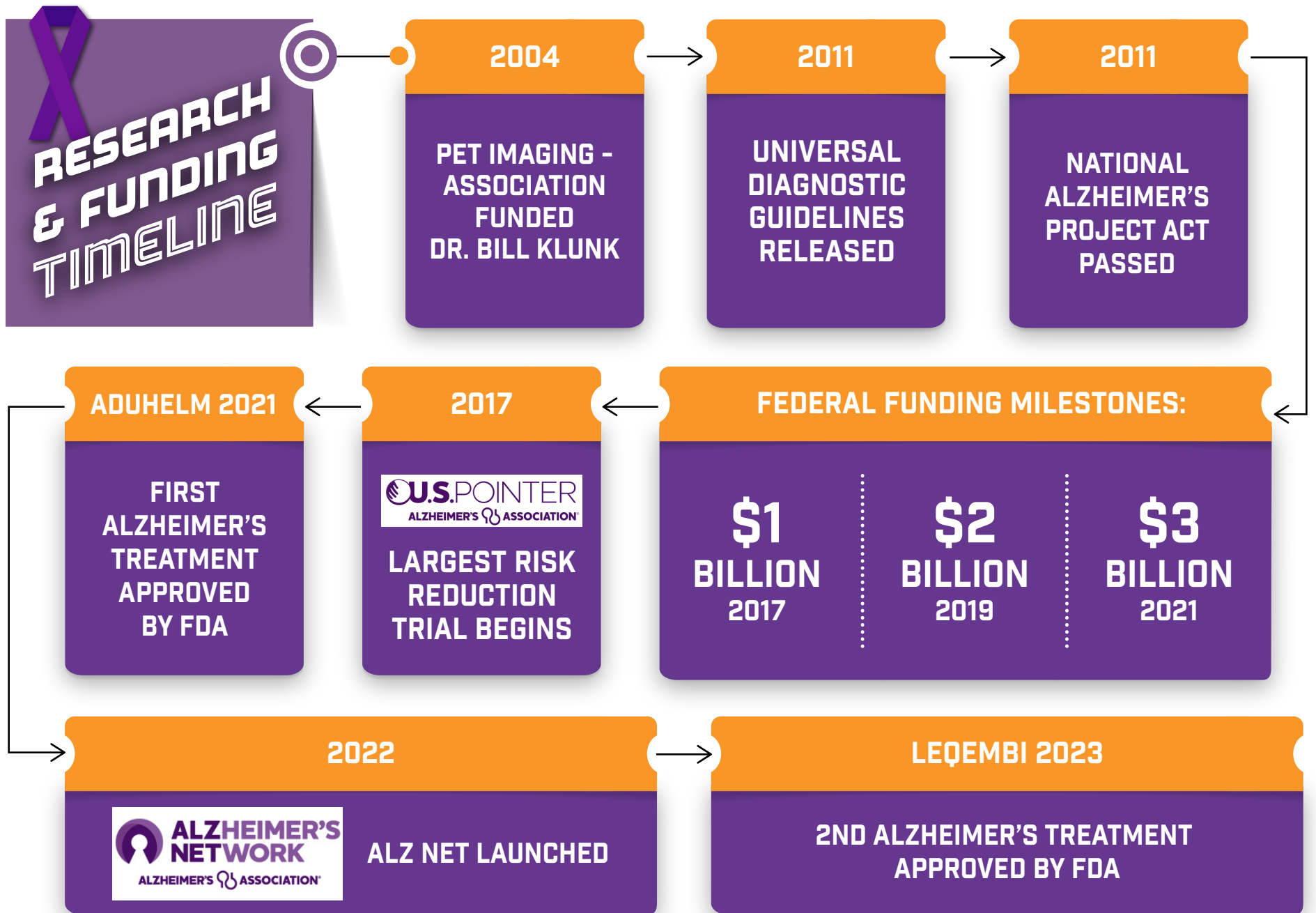
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### GLOBAL REACH CONTINUED FROM #3

community as our mother intended when she set up the foundation.”

Bellaver's Alzheimer's Association funded work focuses on pathologies, other than amyloid and tau, that can exacerbate Alzheimer's disease. “We have two main cells in the brain—microglia and astrocytes—that we believe may be responsible for aggravating Alzheimer's pathology or in helping to trigger Alzheimer's disease,” she explained. “They give support to brain function and are also responsible for inflammation in the brain. We believe that by studying these cells, we can discover new targets for drug treatment.”



DR. THARICK PASCOAL, PICTURED 6TH FROM THE LEFT

Bellaver's interest in the aging brain brought her to Pittsburgh to work with other researchers who shared the same interest. This was also an attraction for Tharick Pascoal, MD, PhD, neurologist and assistant professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, who performed his residency in Brazil and earned a Ph.D. in Canada before coming to the city.

“In the Department of Psychiatry alone, in the past two to three years we've hired people from five different continents to work on Alzheimer's disease,” he said. “Pittsburgh was the first to use a PET scan to discover amyloid pathology, and everything has built on that. Now people come from many different places—researchers with expertise in biomarkers, clinical trials, medications—to actively work together, all with slightly different views into the disease. It's what makes Pittsburgh unique.”

At the ADRC, studies and clinical trials are taking place with the goal of improving the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with the disease, and those who are at risk of developing it. This includes the Senior Moment Study, which is designed to better understand how mild memory changes may or may

not be related to the future development of Alzheimer's disease, and The AHEAD Study, which tests whether an investigational treatment can slow or stop the earliest brain changes due to Alzheimer's disease in people with a higher risk of developing the disease later in life. Since brain changes related to Alzheimer's disease can begin up to 20 years before a person notices any symptoms, finding a treatment that targets memory loss early could affect the progression of the disease.

### THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Even as researchers are making new discoveries, it's important to ensure that any drugs coming out of that research are clinically safe for patients. To this end, the Alzheimer's Association recently launched ALZ-NET (Alzheimer's Network for Treatment and Diagnostics), a directory that tracks clinical and safety data for patients treated with any new FDA-approved Alzheimer's therapies.

With participation and leadership from the ADRC, the Association's goals for ALZ-NET are to enhance care and improve outcomes of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease. They also look to inform and improve clinical practice, including the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's. ALZ-NET will help the field understand health disparities in care and evaluate the effectiveness of new treatments in diverse populations. Similar successful networks for heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS and multiple sclerosis have enabled stakeholders to better understand the long term effectiveness of their therapies.



DR. OSCAR LOPEZ

“Through ALZ-NET, if a person has been treated with one of the medications for a number of years and something happens down the line, we'll

be able to better understand what happened using real-world evidence,” added Dr. Oscar Lopez, MD, FAAN, director, University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). “ALZ-NET is important because we don't know the long-term effects of these medications, and we need to follow these patients in an organized manner to determine the outcomes.”



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## IS IT ALZHEIMER'S OR NORMAL AGING?

As we get older, we tend to get a little more forgetful. But how can you tell when memory loss is just a normal part of aging, or something more serious, like Alzheimer's disease or other dementias?

To help answer this question, the Alzheimer's Association has put together a list of the Ten Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's. These include:

- **MEMORY LOSS THAT DISRUPTS DAILY LIFE**
- **CHALLENGES IN PLANNING OR SOLVING PROBLEMS**
- **DIFFICULTY COMPLETING FAMILIAR TASKS**
- **CONFUSION WITH TIME OR PLACE**
- **TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING VISUAL IMAGES OR SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS**
- **NEW PROBLEMS WITH WORDS IN SPEAKING OR WRITING**
- **MISPLACING THINGS AND LOSING THE ABILITY TO RETRACE STEPS**
- **DECREASED OR POOR JUDGEMENT**
- **WITHDRAWAL FROM WORK OR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**
- **AND CHANGES IN MOOD OR PERSONALITY**

The Association also provides a side-by-side comparison on its website of the differences between Alzheimer's and typical memory-related changes to help determine if a person is having a 'senior moment' or if it's something more serious. A normal sign of aging, for example, would be occasionally forgetting a word; a symptom of Alzheimer's disease might be difficulty in having a conversation.

"Early detection matters, because an accurate diagnosis can help people understand what's going on; not only the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, but possible treatment options. It can also help them prepare for what's coming in the future," said Sara Murphy, vice-president, programs and services, Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter.

"A proper diagnosis provides peace of mind," she added. "We want to empower people to take that step, instead of remaining in denial that they are experiencing symptoms of Alzheimer's disease or avoiding getting a diagnosis altogether."

Alzheimer's disease is a public health crisis; not just an aging issue. More than 6 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's, and an estimated 6.7 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in 2023.

**IF YOU THINK THAT YOU OR A LOVED ONE MAY BE  
EXHIBITING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, VISIT  
[HTTPS://WWW.ALZ.ORG/ALZHEIMERS-DEMENTIA/10\\_SIGNS](https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/10_signs)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**



In 2023, Alzheimer's  
and other dementias will  
cost the nation

**\$345 billion**

By 2050,  
these costs  
could rise  
to nearly

**\$1 trillion**

# ALZHEIMER'S IMPACT MOVEMENT (AIM) ADVANCES CAUSE THROUGH POLITICAL PROCESS



Alzheimer's disease is not just an aging issue—it's a public health crisis. More than 6 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's, and in 2023, an estimated 6.7 million Americans age 65 and older were living with the disease.

Alzheimer's affects not only individuals, but families, businesses and communities. And while there is good news—with new diagnostic tests making it easier to identify Alzheimer's and new medications coming on line to help delay the progression of the disease—this new era of treatment is already facing hurdles when it comes to providing Alzheimer's patients with access to the care they need.

The Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Alzheimer's Association is working to change this. As the advocacy arm of the Alzheimer's Association, AIM fights to support Alzheimer's and dementia research funding and to advance bipartisan legislation that will have a positive and meaningful impact on people living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers today and in the future.

"AIM works to ensure that Alzheimer's

remains a leading priority on Capitol Hill by participating in the political process," said Jen Ebersol, director of state government affairs, Alzheimer's Association of Greater Pennsylvania. "We work to educate policymakers of both parties to make sure that Alzheimer's and dementia are part of the national plan. Our voices make sure that Alzheimer's remains a national priority."

Working collaboratively, AIM volunteers target numerous issues on both a state and national level that affect those with the disease. These include the creation of Alzheimer's-related public health infrastructure, pushing for more federal funding for research, and fighting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for its decision to block access to FDA-approved Alzheimer's treatments.

"When we talk about the need to move our mission forward and to change the trajectory of the disease, work in policy and advocacy is instrumental in that," said Ebersol. "The impact of what we do is big, because changing the laws changes the lives of so many people."

**TO VOLUNTEER FOR AIM OR TO LEARN MORE, VISIT [WWW.ALZIMPACT.ORG](http://WWW.ALZIMPACT.ORG) OR REACH OUT TO EBERSOLE AT [JAEBERSOLE@ALZ.ORG](mailto:JAEBERSOLE@ALZ.ORG).**



## THE LONGEST DAY CONTINUED FROM #6

awareness and funds to combat the disease. Last year, she raised \$5,000; her goal this year is double that.

"I tell everyone about it; I talk with friends, family, and ask them to share my ride with others. I talk to businesses and generate money through Facebook," she said. "This year, I upped my goal because my father passed away last year from vascular dementia. Having gone through this with both parents and seeing their cognitive

decline has really upped the ante."

This year, Brown will be riding the entire distance of the Erie Canalway trail from Albany to Buffalo—about 360 miles in four days. "I do this to honor my parents, and I also want to improve the quality of life for other people's loved ones experiencing Alzheimer's," she said. "It was devastating watching my parents decline the way they did, and there are thousands of people going through this same thing. I wouldn't wish it on anyone."

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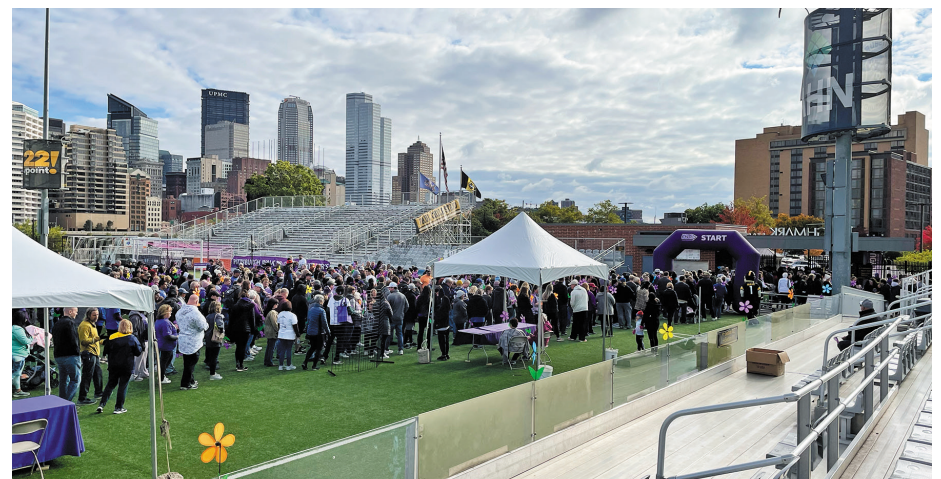
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