

## DESCRIPTION

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. Dementia can interfere with a person's daily life because of the loss of brain functions such as thinking, remembering and reasoning. Dementia affects an individual's health, quality of life and ability to live independently. It can reduce a person's ability to manage medications and medical conditions, make financial decisions, drive a car or use appliances and tools safely, avoid physical injury, maintain social relationships, and carry out activities of daily living, like bathing or dressing. Alzheimer's disease is a leading cause of disability in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

## HOW ARE WE DOING

Age is a significant factor in developing Alzheimer's; the number of cases steadily increases as people get older. In Ramsey County, Alzheimer's was the fourth leading cause of death with 266 deaths in 2016. Of those deaths, 248 were among residents 75 and older. The age-adjusted death rate from Alzheimer's in Minnesota is 31.8 deaths per 100,000 people compared to the Ramsey County rate of 41.6.<sup>2</sup>

## BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020: Reduce the proportion of preventable hospitalizations in adults aged 65 years and older with diagnosed Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.  
U.S Target: 22.8 percent<sup>3</sup>

## DISPARITIES

More women develop Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. They make up almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's disease.<sup>1</sup> Older African-American and Hispanic individuals are more likely than whites to have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. African-Americans often have an earlier age of onset and show greater severity of symptoms.<sup>4</sup> Because of historical trauma, Native American individuals and families will have more distress over the course of the disease, partially as a result of cultural differences and partially because of their history of being abused within the United States systems.<sup>5</sup>

## RISK FACTORS

There are some risk factors for Alzheimer's disease that can't be controlled, like age and genetic profile. Researchers are studying other factors that may make a difference. A nutritious diet, exercise, social engagement, and mentally stimulating pursuits may help lower the risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. Researchers are also investigating possible connections between cognitive decline and cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.<sup>6</sup> People with Down syndrome have an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's. For people with Down syndrome, about 30 percent of those over 50 have Alzheimer's dementia.<sup>7</sup>

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## Information to note

- Older African-American and Hispanic people are more likely than white people to have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- Women make up almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's disease.

<sup>1</sup> 2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures. Alzheimer's Association Web site. [https://www.alz.org/documents\\_custom/2017-facts-and-figures.pdf](https://www.alz.org/documents_custom/2017-facts-and-figures.pdf). Accessed February 2018.

<sup>2</sup> County Health Tables. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/countytables/profiles2017/index.html>. Accessed February 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Dementias, Including Alzheimer's Disease. HealthyPeople.gov Web site. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/dementias-including-alzheimers-disease/objectives>. Accessed February 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Manly, J.J., Mayeux, R. (2004). Ethnic Differences in dementia and Alzheimer's disease. In Anderson N.A., Bulatao, R.A., Cohen, B. (eds). Critical perspectives on racial and ethnic differentials in health in later life. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press; 2008:95-141.

<sup>5</sup> Native Americans and Dementia: Dealing with Emotional Issues Among Caregivers. Wyoming Geriatric Education Center Web Site. <https://www.slideserve.com/ely/native-americans-and-dementia-dealing-with-emotional-issues-among-caregivers>. Accessed February 2018.

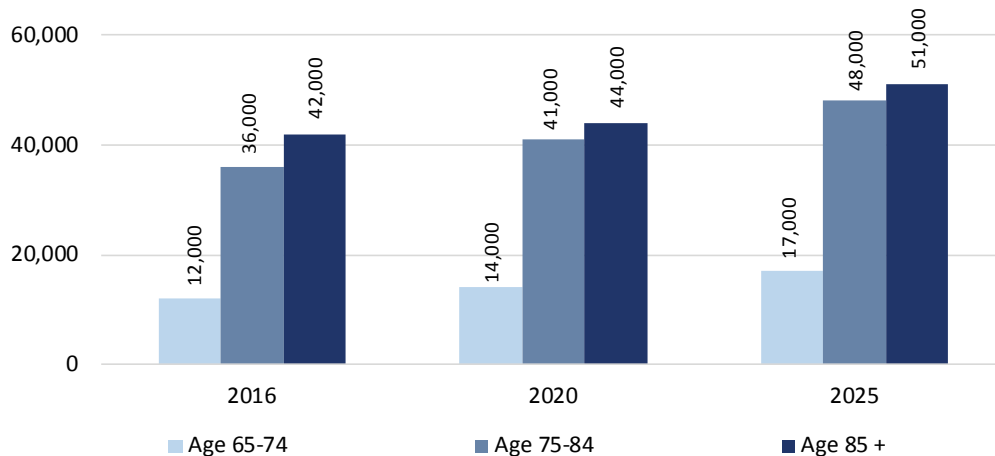
<sup>6</sup> About Alzheimer's Disease: Risk Factors and Prevention. National Institute on Aging Web site. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/topics/risk-factors-prevention>. Accessed February 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's Disease. Alzheimer's Association Web site. <http://www.alz.org/dementia/down-syndrome-alzheimers-symptoms.asp>. Accessed February 2018

## WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers or county program leadership.

Future Estimates of Alzheimer's by Age Group, Minnesota



Source: Alzheimer's Association, 2017.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Alzheimer's Association. (2017). Alzheimer's Statistics Minnesota. [http://www.alz.org/documents\\_custom/facts\\_2016/statesheet\\_minnesota.pdf](http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/facts_2016/statesheet_minnesota.pdf). Accessed February 2018.