

GEORGIA ALZHEIMER'S &
RELATED DEMENTIAS **STATE PLAN**

2020

PROGRESS REPORT



GARD
Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias
Collaborative

Acknowledgments

COUNCIL NAMES AND COLLABORATIVE WORKGROUPS

We would like to acknowledge the members of the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias (GARD) State Plan Advisory Council. Their commitment and leadership to leading GARD efforts are greatly appreciated.

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Chair, Georgia Council on Aging

At the time of publication, the remaining members of the Advisory Council had not yet been appointed. This includes:

- An advocate with a nonprofit or state agency whose role is to improve services for older adults or those living with dementia; and
- A caregiver, current or past, for a family member with dementia who has experience navigating health care service options.

Driving the GARD State Plan efforts is the GARD Collaborative, a statewide network of representatives from agencies, nonprofits, businesses, persons living with dementia and their care partners. The GARD Collaborative comprises six different workgroups tasked with making strides toward the goals and objectives outlined in the State Plan. Current workgroups are:

- Research and Data
- Workforce Development
- Service Delivery
- Public Safety
- Outreach and Partnerships
- Policy

Background

HISTORY & TIMELINES

Background, History & Timeline

Today, more than 150,000 Georgians live with Alzheimer's disease, and tens of thousands more experience other forms of dementia.

Like many states, Georgia answered the call set forth by the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's by crafting a unique blueprint to address the growing challenge of dementia.

The Plan's Beginnings

During the 2013 session of the Georgia General Assembly, legislators created the GARD State Plan Task Force, a multidisciplinary group convened to improve dementia research, awareness, training and care.

The six task force members and dozens of experts in diverse fields formed committees, conducted research and made detailed recommendations that formed the core of the original GARD State Plan. The document described current demographics, prevalence statistics and existing resources; analyzed the state's capacity to meet growing needs; and presented a roadmap to create a more dementia-capable Georgia.

State Plan Establishment

In June 2014, then-Gov. Nathan Deal signed the GARD State Plan. Georgia's recommendations cover a range of topics, including research, services, policy, public safety, workforce development and public education.

State Plan Update

The GARD State Plan was designed to be a living document that is responsive to the needs of Georgians. In 2020, the Division of Aging Services contracted with the Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) staff to update the GARD State Plan.

Throughout the year, GHPC met with GARD Advisory Council members and Collaborative workgroup members to gather recommendations for changes to the original 2014 plan. DAS updated the GARD plan to include an actionable format with identifiable and measurable goals through meetings with the committees and a review of relevant materials. In early 2021, Gov. Brian Kemp signed the updated plan.



State Plan

UPDATES & GOALS



State Plan

Find the full GARD State Plan at aging.georgia.gov/georgia-alzheimers-related-dementias-state-plan.

Research and Data

- Champion and strengthen existing research and data collection related to cognitive decline and dementia diagnosis, care and support.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to expand research and data collection of dementia-related surveillance, care and support.
- Support analysis, translation and dissemination of available dementia-related research and data for sharing with multiple audiences.

Workforce Development

- Develop a person-centered, dementia-capable, culturally responsive workforce.
- Develop and implement a tiered career and training model for Georgia's direct-care workforce to improve quality of care.
- Improve job quality and retention of the dementia workforce.

Service Delivery

- Increase the availability of health and social services tailored for individuals living with dementia and their families.
- Support efforts that provide training for care partners and volunteers in person-centered care.
- Improve consumer access and experience with the service delivery system, focusing on informal service networks not already captured by the Area Agencies on Aging network, public health departments and health care systems.
- Improve consumer and care partner access to needed services and information, including identifying eligibility criteria for different services.
- Strengthen care partners' (family, professional and/or volunteer) capacity to deliver high quality services for persons living with dementia and their families.

State Plan

UPDATES & GOALS

Public Safety

- Ensure public safety and financial organizations are prepared to assure the safety of persons living with cognitive decline and dementia who are at risk of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.
- Reduce rates of injury and enhance legal protections for people living with cognitive decline and dementia.
- Ensure the inclusion of people living with cognitive decline and dementia and considerations for their unique needs in the state's emergency preparedness plans.

Outreach and Partnership

- Initiate and maximize opportunities to disseminate accurate, comprehensive and timely information about dementia risk factors, protective elements and management to the public.
- Educate the public and organizations to become more "dementia-friendly" and dementia-inclusive across all types of dementia.
- Expand Georgia's capacity to promote brain health and address the needs of persons living with cognitive decline and dementia, their care partners and their families through strategic partnerships and resource sharing, the leveraging of existing funding and accessing new resources.

Policy

- Inform state budgetary, legislative and regulatory actions that affect individuals living with dementia and their care partners.
- Promote awareness and implementation of local policies that support dementia inclusion and dementia friendliness.



Achievements

& PROGRESS

Dementia Friends and Dementia-Friendly Efforts

To support dementia-friendly efforts in Georgia, GARD launched the Dementia Friends program in 2019 and worked with the Georgia Gerontology Society (GGS) to distribute grants for dementia-friendly initiatives throughout the state.

Dementia Friends

Dementia Friends is a global movement developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom and is now implemented in Georgia and many other states.

The goal of Dementia Friends is to help everyone in a community understand five key messages about dementia, how it affects people and how we each can make a difference in the lives of people living with the disease. Since the program's launch, dozens of volunteer Dementia Friends Champions have offered Dementia Friends information sessions across the state and virtually.

As of publication of this report, more than 1,100 Georgians have attended an information session and become a Dementia Friend.

Dementia-Friendly Grants

In 2019, DHS partnered with GGS to offer five Dementia-Friendly Community Grants to organizations throughout the state to initiate Dementia Friendly efforts in their area. Various in-person events were initially scheduled in the Bulloch, Rockdale, Newton, Richmond and Cherokee county areas. However, because of the COVID-19 crisis, GGS and grantee partners had to redirect efforts to a virtual platform.

GGS instead hosted a virtual web series highlighting Dementia Friends and Dementia Friendly information targeting the above-mentioned communities. Two webinars feature videos from interviews with six individuals living with cognitive impairment and their care partners. Others focused on the need for a Dementia Friendly Georgia and discussed how communities could implement strategies to become more Dementia Friendly.

These videos will be used for future educational events in partnership with GARD. GGS also created a new "Five Key Messages" video for Dementia Friends Information Sessions highlighting individuals living in Georgia.



Achievements

& PROGRESS



B-SEEN Project/CDC BOLD Grant

In 2020, representatives from the GARD Advisory Council and Collaborative partnered with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to apply for a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD) grant. BOLD grants were awarded to aid grantees' efforts to implement the CDC Healthy Brain Initiative Roadmap actions. Georgia was awarded a three-year grant to implement the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure using Systemic Education, Evidence and Networks (B-SEEN) project.

The B-SEEN project aims to strengthen our public health system's approach to dementia by building upon existing infrastructure and the GARD State Plan. Specifically, Georgia will increase the number of stakeholders engaging in statewide dementia collaboration and action and emphasizing Public Health workers (e.g., trauma system, EMS, health districts and Rural Extension offices). Project teams will engage in systemic population-based efforts to increase impact in the areas of dementia risk reduction, early diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD), prevention and management of comorbidities and avoidable hospitalizations, and caregiving for persons with dementia.

Georgia's B-SEEN project will achieve these outcomes through the implementation of evidence-based strategies and activities that address dementia and support the promotion of brain health among populations with a high burden of ADRD—specifically African Americans, Hispanics and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and those living in high burden rural areas. An ad-hoc GARD collaborative workgroup chaired by a DPH representative will ensure GARD's continued representation and action on the B-SEEN project.