

# Wellness Bulletin

## November 2020

Hello CMMHC Staff, I hope everyone is doing well!

This month the CMMHC Wellness Committee is drawing our focus to National Alzheimer's Awareness month. Raising awareness for Alzheimer's is a topic exceptionally important to me as it affects so many people and families, myself included. Having someone you love diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease is scary for everyone involved. This past May, I lost my grandmother to an 8-year battle with Alzheimer's disease. As you look ahead at the progression of Alzheimer's disease, you realize the disease locks all the doors and exits. It steals what is most precious, a person's memory and other important mental functions. There is no pardon and no escape for your loved one. It is a disease with no cure and it's progressive. Throughout the years my grandmother's birthday would pass and she did not know because she had Alzheimer's. She did not recognize anyone in my family 2 years into her disease. She was not able to speak, walk, and feed herself 4 years into her disease. With this, also came the inability to keep her own head upright. During the final stages, on visits I was lucky to receive any eye contact, let alone a smile. Time becomes the enemy for families with how bad the deterioration can be, how far it can go, the different stages, and ultimately how your loved one fades away to nothing before your eyes. Across the United States, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. This number is staggering, but there is hope. Throughout the month of November, it is important for us to come together to acknowledge the challenges faced by those struggling with Alzheimer's disease, while vowing never to relent our determination in finding a cure.

**Anna Tienter**

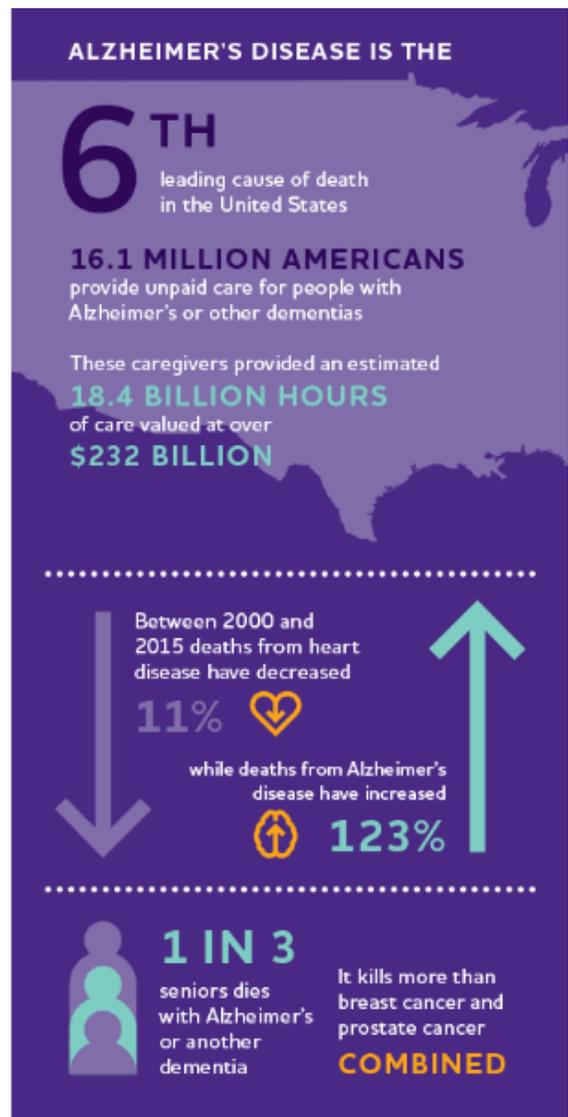
**Human Resources Generalist**



**cmmhc**

Central Minnesota Mental Health Center

*Together, Creating a Healthier Life*



EARLY AND ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS  
COULD SAVE UP TO

**\$7.9** TRILLION  
in medical and care costs

IN 2018, Alzheimer's and other  
dementias will cost the nation

**\$277 BILLION**

BY 2050, these costs  
could rise as high as

**\$1.1 TRILLION**



**5.7**  
MILLION

Americans are living  
with Alzheimer's

BY 2050, this  
number is projected  
to rise to nearly

**14**  
MILLION



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## 10 WAYS TO HELP A FAMILY LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S

- 1. Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease.**  
Learn about its effects and how to respond.
- 2. Stay in touch.**  
A card, call or visit can show you care.
- 3. Be patient.**  
Adjusting to an Alzheimer's diagnosis is an ongoing process and each person reacts differently.
- 4. Offer a shoulder to lean on.**  
The disease can impact the entire family. Simply offering your support and friendship can provide comfort.
- 5. Include the person with dementia in conversation.**  
It's important to engage the person even as his or her communication skills decline.
- 6. Help the family tackle its to-do list.**  
Prepare a meal, run an errand or provide a ride.
- 7. Invite family members to join you in leisure activities.**  
Invite them to take a walk or participate in other enjoyable activities.
- 8. Offer a reprieve.**  
Spend time with the person living with dementia so family members can enjoy time alone or with friends.
- 9. Be flexible.**  
The family may need time to assess its needs. If they don't accept your offer for support or assistance right away, try asking again later.
- 10. Get involved with the Alzheimer's cause.**  
Show your support for the family by joining the fight against the disease. See reverse for ways to participate.

