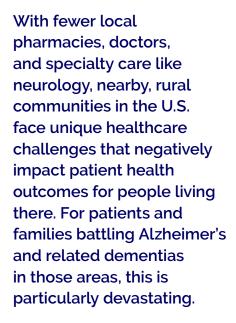
Rural Communities Need Alzheimer's Treatments Now More than Ever

See What the Experts Are Saying



"Across the country, people living in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to die from Alzheimer's as those living in urban areas. And research by the University of Iowa found that agricultural workers are 46% more likely to develop dementia. At the same time, these communities have diminished access to effective treatments for these conditions."

<u>Pennsylvania State Grange</u> <u>President Matthew Espenshade</u> "Those who live in rural
Appalachia, in particular,
are both much more
disadvantaged on the whole
from a socioeconomic
perspective and have
a higher burden of
Alzheimer's disease and
related disorders compared
to those who live elsewhere.
It's a double whammy."

Ohio State's College of Public Health Assistant Professor of Epidemiology Jeffrey Wing

While this fatal disease is more prevalent in rural communities, <u>fewer rural patients</u> are seeing neurologists for dementia compared to those in more urban areas.

"What's troubling is that there are longstanding, socioeconomic disparities and also geographic disparities in access to specialized care. And what we're seeing is those disparities still apply here in this population."

<u>University of Minnesota's School of Public</u> Health Assistant Professor Sayeh Nikpay "Neurologists in the United States are not evenly spread out, which affects whether patients can see a neurologist for certain conditions like dementia and stroke... some areas of the country have up to four times as many neurologists as the lowest served areas, and these differences mean that some people do not have access to neurologists who are specially trained in treating brain diseases."

<u>University of Michigan in Ann Arbor Researcher and American</u>
Academy of Neurology Fellow Brian C. Callaghan, MD, MS

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"We are facing an increasing demand for physicians who can meet the needs of people with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias as the number of people diagnosed is rising...Given this added burden of access in rural and minoritized populations, we need to better understand the barriers people face in accessing care so we can help them achieve better dementia outcomes."

Washington State University's Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Researcher Solmaz Amiri

"It's frustrating to me as a professional that we don't have many geriatric physicians in our areas and neurologists in our areas, much less an actual dementia center ... the people who live here feel that people in rural areas get left out and forgotten about sometimes."

Alzheimer's Association Greater Cincinnati Chapter Program Director Melissa Dever

"There's something happening in the rural context that is elevating the risk for dementia. And, unfortunately, a lot of the solutions are being conceived in urban centers, so this presents an opportunity for us to implement community participatory methods where solutions for rural, come from rural."

University of Minnesota Medical School's Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team Member Kristen Jacklin, PhD

Adding to these issues is the fact that Alzheimer's is the only disease with FDA-approved treatments that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has a burdensome "Coverage with Evidence Development" (CED) policy. This requires patients to participate in clinical studies to gain coverage, making it even more difficult for rural patients to access the treatments they need.

"Clinical research just doesn't reach rural areas. Very few new drug trials or studies, or research studies with early diagnosis or biomarkers. There's a lot of things that our rural patients miss out on because they are just simply overlooked when it comes to these research trials."

University of Florida's Division of Geriatric **Medicine Dr. Jamie Bass**



This CED policy adversely impacts already underserved populations. If policymakers at CMS want to help rural Americans, the agency should reconsider this barrier to approved treatments. **Rural Americans deserve better.**

