An Optimistic Trend

Exercise, Healthcare and Education may be reducing the risk of age specific Alzheimer’s disease

A number of recent population-based studies from countries around the world suggest an optimistic trend that the age-specific risk of dementia may be declining in high-income countries over the past 25 years.

The number of older adults with dementia will increase around the world in the decades ahead as populations age. Current estimates suggest that about 4.2 million adults in the US have dementia and that the attributable economic cost of their care is about $200 billion per year. The worldwide dementia prevalence is estimated at 44.3 million people and the total cost at $604 billion per year. It is expected that the worldwide prevalence will triple to 135.5 million by 2050.

Owing to this large and growing impact of dementia, governments around the world have made a priority of expanding the collection of data on individuals and populations to better understand, address, and track the current and future impact of the dementia epidemic. For instance, President Obama signed the National Alzheimer’s Project Act into law in 2011, directing new US government efforts for improving treatments and prevention and collecting data to track progress of these efforts over time. The G8 Dementia Summit was held in London in 2013 in recognition of the growing global impact of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and dementia and to begin to coordinate efforts for international collaboration and data sharing. Finally, the World Health Organization recently declared dementia to be a ‘public health priority’ which should be on the public health agenda of all countries.

Over the last 25 years, many governments have been working to improve the care and support for people with dementia.

See page 4, Optimistic

Karen’s Story

A Loving Daughter and Caregiver - AARP Honors an Alaskan

About four years ago my mother, Beverly, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. She was living in Arizona at the time so my husband and I swooped down and brought her to Alaska.

She now lives at a small assisted living facility near our home. I am her power of attorney, medical representative and trustee of her living trust. I take her to medical appointments and manage her medications. I cook her meals and help her with her daily activities.

A portrait of Karen Hollar and mother Beverly with Sleeping Lady in the distance.

AARP has recently sought to celebrate caregivers around the nation by helping tell their individual stories. Here is Alaskan Karen Hollar’s story in her own words.

Over the last 25 years, many governments have been working to improve the care and support for people with dementia.

See page 5, Karen’s Story
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Letter From The Executive Director

Greetings,

We at Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska said farewell to 2015 by gathering for a staff holiday party in the merrily transformed conference room of our Anchorage office. The new year, is of course, traditionally dedicated to reflection upon past achievements and the crafting of new resolutions, but what struck me as particularly worth contemplating during this celebratory evening was a profound sense of community. Coworkers, board members, volunteers, friends and family gathered to talk, laugh and break bread – all of us performing the fundamental acts of generosity that define and strengthen a sense of common good.

Our organization began as a support group for the family members and loved ones of those living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD). Thirty one years later we are a very different organization in terms of size, scope and expertise. But in a fundamental sense we are still performing the task of building community, offering support and striving to ensure the highest quality of life for the most vulnerable Alaskans throughout the state.

2016 marks another important milestone in our history as we will no longer be offering In-Home Services. In order to comply with new federal regulations, we went through the orderly, and at times difficult, process of saying farewell to a program that served thousands of frail elders across Alaska for the past 23 years. I would like to personally thank In-Home Services manager Karen Cobb and her wonderful staff of workers whose dedication to their clients have enriched the lives of thousands of Alaskans. In-Home Services leaves a legacy of excellence that will continue to inspire our organization.

I would also like to welcome our new care coordinators. On January 1st, we expanded our Mat-Su office to provide care coordination and added six new care coordinators. In February, we will be expanding our Juneau office and adding five new care coordinators. Expansion of our care coordination program in these two communities provides us with the honor of further serving many of our most vulnerable fellow Alaskans.

So, we look forward to this new year and continuing to meet the needs of communities that we serve. And as a reminder, please consider to Pick.Click.Give. on our behalf when you sign up for your Permanent Fund Dividend before August 31st. Every donation enables us to better serve Alaskans in need.

Best Regards

Karl Garber
Executive Director
countries have seen increases in obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, all of which have been linked to an increase in dementia risk. However, at the same time, there have been important changes in treatments for these cardiovascular risk factors, including more widespread and intensive medication treatments. These improvements in cardiovascular risk factor control have helped cut the key vascular-related complications of diabetes—myocardial infarction, stroke, and amputations—in half over the last 25 years and by extension have likely had important ‘spillover’ benefits for brain health and the risk for cognitive decline and dementia.

A number of ongoing randomized clinical trials are directly testing whether lifestyle interventions to improve the vascular risk profiles of middle-aged and older adults will decrease their risk for cognitive decline and dementia. The Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE) Study tested whether a structured moderate-intensity physical-activity program would decrease the risk for mobility limitations and cognitive decline in adults who are 70 to 89 years old. The Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability (FINGER) is randomly assigning adults who are 60 to 77 years old to a multi-pronged intervention that included diet advice, physical exercise, cognitive training, social activities, and management of cardiovascular risk factors, while the control group received only standard health advice.

The preliminary results from FINGER were reported at the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference in 2014 and showed that, after 2 years of follow-up, individuals randomly assigned to the multi-pronged lifestyle intervention had significantly better cognitive outcomes than the control group.

The other important worldwide trend relevant to brain health over the last 25 years has been the large growth in educational attainment in both developed and developing countries. A major tenet of the ‘cognitive reserve’ hypothesis is that education facilitates the development of compensatory neural circuits that provide an increased capacity to withstand damage from vascular and inflammatory brain insults, thereby delaying dementia onset and compressing cognitive morbidity closer to the end of life. Therefore, rising levels of education may be contributing to a decreasing risk for AD and dementia among individuals around the world by increasing the stock of cognitive reserve among those who have been able to take advantage of these expanding educational opportunities.

Of course, it should be noted that increased levels of education likely have an impact on later-life brain health through multiple and complex pathways, not just a direct effect on brain biology and cognitive reserve. For instance, more education is associated with higher levels of wealth, occupations that lead to more cognitive stimulation during one’s working life, and health behaviors (for example, lower rates of smoking and obesity and higher rates of physical activity) that confer increased protection against cognitive and physical decline.

Rising levels of education and more widespread and successful treatment of key cardiovascular risk factors may be the driving factors accounting for the apparent decline in dementia risk. Whether this optimistic trend will continue in the face of rising worldwide levels of obesity and diabetes and whether this trend is also occurring in low- and middle-income countries are key unanswered questions which will have enormous implications for the extent of the future worldwide impact of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia on patients, families, and societies in the decades ahead.
Winter Workshop

Our upcoming Winter Workshops in both Anchorage and Juneau will feature two experts who have gained wide renown for their innovative, person-centered approaches to dementia care.

Dr. G. Allen Power is a geriatrician, internist and Clinical Associate Professor of medicine at the University of Rochester. Dr. Power’s lecture, *Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-Being,* will emphasize methods of enhancing the well being of individuals living with dementia. His pioneering ideas suggest that there are drawbacks to the dominant “biomedical” approach to dementia care. Dr. Power will discuss his vision for an “experiential” approach to caregiving that enhances the “seven domains of well being.”

Rosemary Bakker is a Research Associate in Gerontological Design in Medicine at Cornell University. Ms. Bakker’s program, *At Home With Dementia, by Design: Dementia-Friendly Living Spaces,* highlights the art and science of designing environments that take into consideration the daily challenges faced by individuals living with dementia. Improving living spaces includes rethinking standard notions of accessibility, furniture, flooring, lighting and nearly all aspects of architecture and design that might trigger agitation.

*The Winter Workshop is sponsored by Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska, Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL), Alaska Training Cooperative and Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. For more information and to register please visit ALZALASKA.ORG*

Karen’s Story (page 1)

appointments, manage her finances, make sure she has everything she needs, and visit as often as I can.

It’s been really hard. It’s a long grieving process. Every time someone with Alzheimer’s loses a part of their personality, you grieve the part of them that is lost.

As she continues to decline, my mother holds on to her caring personality though. She was a nurse and then worked as a special education elementary teacher. She understands when someone is hurting or needs something. Whether in her assisted living facility or when I’m out with her, she hands out tissues and pats on the back to make sure everyone is ok.

Although it has been difficult at times, I am so glad we have had this time together.

*Portrait and story courtesy of AARP*

ABC’s of Caregiving

Honoring Connection

This class emphasizes ways to improve communication between you and an individual with dementia. Longstanding methods of communication might seem unsuccessful as dementia becomes more pronounced.

This class offers concrete techniques, suggestions and examples of how to adapt your approach to communication and improve the connection between you and your care partner.

**Offered This February:**

**Anchorage**
Monday, 2/8
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM
Contact: Debbie Chulick at 561-3313 or dchulick@alzalaska.org

**Juneau**
Thursday, 2/25
12:00-1:30PM
Contact: Amber Smith at 586-6044 or asmith@alzalaska.org

All of our course offerings can be found on our website at AlzAlaska.org.
SAVE THE DATES!

Thursday, February 11th, 5:00 - 8:00pm

Come enjoy an evening of fun, fashion, and fund-raising for the Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska at Apricot Lane located on Level 2 at the 5th Avenue Mall in downtown Anchorage. A perfect time to select a Valentine’s Day surprise for a loved one.

Apricot Lane Boutique will contribute to ARA 20% of all their sales during those hours. Thank you to Nancy Lee and Mrs. Alaska Rory Van Nortwick for organizing this heartfelt event.

May 7th
Register Online or
Walk up Registration begins at 10:00
Amblin’ Walk begins at 11:00am

Sign up to join us for Food, Prizes and Music at our 12th Annual walk and fund-raise in support of Alaskans affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Visit AlzAlaska.org for more details and to register.

Presented by The Anchorage Golf Course
3651 O’Malley Road

Support Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska

When you apply for your 2016 dividend, you can share some of it with Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska. It is a chance for all of us to come together and improve the quality of life for Alaskans throughout the state. Your generosity helps support the various programs we conduct in ensuring that the most vulnerable Alaskans in cities, towns and villages are getting the care they need. Support groups in Anchorage, ABC’s of Caregiving classes in King Cove, Movie nights in Fairbanks, Memory Screenings in Juneau, Art Links in Mat-Su - just a sampling of our every day efforts to unite Alaskans until a cure is found.

Register by March 31st and earn the opportunity to Double Your Dividend. August 31st is the final date to choose the Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska as Your Pick.Click.Give charity of choice. Thank You!
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Dewey & Louise Whetsell

Taking Leave of a Friend

Blue mountains lie beyond the north wall;
Round the city’s eastern side flows the white water.
Here we part, friend, once forever.
You go ten thousand miles, drifting away
Like an unrooted water-grass.
Oh, the floating clouds and the thoughts of a wanderer!
Oh, the sunset and the longing of an old friend!
We ride away from each other, waving our hands,
While our horses neigh softly, softly . . . .
- Li Po
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Classes & Events around the state

For information on all classes or programs visit www.AlzAlaska.org/events or contact the office nearest you.

ANCHORAGE
1750 Abbott Road, 561-3313

ABC Presentations
Honoring Connection
Monday, 2/8
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM

End of Life
Monday, 2/15
10-11:30AM

Understanding Adult Guardianship
Monday, 2/22
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM

Dining with Dementia
Monday, 3/7
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM

Fall Prevention
Monday, 3/21
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM

Home & Community Safety
Monday, 3/28
10-11:30AM or 5:30-7PM

Savvy Caregiver
Tuesdays, 1/5-2/9
5:30-7:30PM
OR Thursdays, 3/3-4/7
10am-12pm

Virtual Dementia Tour
Wednesday, 2/17
1-5pm, by appointment
& Thursday, 2/18
9am-12pm, by appointment

*Mind Matters
Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30AM
12/23-2/10; 3/24-5/4
1:00-2:30

Art Links
Fridays, 11:00-Noon

Winter Workshop
Wednesday, 3/16
9:00-5:00PM

MAT-SU
10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla, 746-3413

ABC Presentations
Music: A Powerful Tool for Caregiving
Thursday, 2/17
1-2:30PM or 5:30-7PM

Behaviors That Challenge Us
Tuesday, 3/22
1-2:30PM or 5:30-7:00PM

Savvy Caregiver
Tuesdays, 1/12-2/16
1:00-3:00PM

*Participants Require Pre-Screening

FAIRBANKS
565 University Ave., # 2, 452-2277

ABC Presentations
Behaviors That Challenge Us
Wednesday, 2/24
5:30-7:00PM

Communication Tips
Tuesday, 3/22
5:30-7:00PM

Savvy Caregiver
Wednesdays, 3/2-4/6
5:30-7:30PM

Virtual Dementia Tour
Tuesday, 2/23
9-5PM, by appointment

Art Links
Thursday, 11:00-Noon

STATEWIDE ONLINE OFFERINGS

GoToMeeting Statewide

ABC Webinars
Music: A Powerful Tool for Caregiving
Thursday, 2/11
7-8:30PM

Medicaid Waiver
Thursday, 3/10
7-8:30PM

Professional Webinars
Behaviors That Challenge Us
Tuesday, 2/16
12:00-1:00PM

Dining and Dementia
Tuesday, 3/29
12:00-1:00PM

# Support Groups around the state

*A safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to share experiences and solutions.*

## Statewide Telephone Support Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st and 3rd Wednesday 2-3 PM</td>
<td>Gay Wellman 822-5620 or (800) 478-1080 x6</td>
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<td>Dial in 1-877-216-1555, Code 927989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester Park Cooperative</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Friday 10 -11:30 AM</td>
<td>Kim Jung 561-3313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Anchorage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Thursday 12PM-1:30PM</td>
<td>Debbie Chulick 561-3313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>4th Thursday 5:30-7:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester Park Cooperative</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Friday 10 -11:30 AM</td>
<td>Kim Jung 561-3313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Eagle River

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Thursday 6:30-8:00 PM</td>
<td>Linda Shepard 746-3413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Fairbanks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Tuesday 11:30-1:00PM</td>
<td>Joan Adams 452-2277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday 5:30-7:00PM</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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## Homer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2 Thursday's a month 2:30PM-3:30PM</td>
<td>Mary Jo 235-2295</td>
</tr>
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## Juneau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Senior Services</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more information</td>
<td>463-6177 or (866)746-6177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Ketchikan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ketchikan Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more information</td>
<td>Bernice 225-8080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Level</td>
<td></td>
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## Kodiak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kodiak Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>4th Thursday 12:30-1:30 PM</td>
<td>486-6181</td>
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## Mat-Su Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday 1-2:30 PM</td>
<td>Linda Shepard 746-3413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>First Fridays 10:00-11:30AM</td>
<td>Janice Downing 561-3313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK Veterans &amp; Pioneer Home</td>
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## Seward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seward Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>4th Thursday 1-2 PM</td>
<td>262-1280 or (800) 776-8210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Sitka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brave Heart Volunteers</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Call for more info.</td>
<td>747-4600 Krisanne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Soldotna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldotna Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>2nd &amp; Last Tuesday 1-3 PM</td>
<td>262-1280 or (800) 776-8210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Sterling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Senior Center</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>1st Tuesday 1-2 PM</td>
<td>262-6808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISIT OUR LIBRARY!

Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska has books, films and other resources that you can check out in person or reserve on line. Visit our website AlzAlaska.org and click on the RESOURCES tab. Here are a few of our offerings:

Alzheimer’s: A Caregiver’s Guide and Sourcebook • Blueprint for Home-Based Longterm care for the Elderly in Alaska • Guide to Nutrition and Feeding • Caring for an Alzheimer’s Patient Across the Miles • Day to Day • Facing Alzheimer’s: Family Caregivers Speak • When someone you care for has Alzheimer’s • Medical Assistance in Alaska • Memories in the Making • My Journey into Alzheimer’s Nursing Home Laws • 36-Hour Day • Understanding Difficult Behaviors • The Validation Breakthrough