

Community Outreach Volunteers Needed

Seeking individuals who want to be a part of something meaningful! With just a few hours a month, you can make a difference in your community. The Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan Work Group needs Community Outreach Volunteers to work as local advocates raising awareness and being the "boots on the ground" across Montana.



There are many benefits, including:

- Being part of something important - helping make Montana a 'Dementia Friendly' state.
- Connecting with your local community to make a direct, meaningful impact.
- Raising awareness and helping deliver valuable resources.
- Standing out and gaining respect as a valuable team player and volunteer citizen.
- Connecting your community to the greater statewide and nationwide effort.
- Developing key partnerships in towns large and small throughout Montana

As a Community Outreach Volunteer, you will:

- Keep connected to the Communication Committee of Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan Work Group, by email, phone calls and committee meetings (monthly by phone).
- Receive important correspondence, including the monthly *MT Alzheimer's Outreach Update*, to share with local community groups, media and community stakeholders.
- Participate in social networking and encourage others to share valuable information using various platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snap Chat, and more.
- Engage community partners, individuals, businesses by organizing discussions and presentations, providing valuable materials, and articles for their newsletters.
- Contact local librarian(s) to assist with disseminating information, setting up a "dementia friendly" area in the library, share suggestions for resources and books specifically about dementia, arrange presentations or informational sessions.
- Set up resource centers in other locations - churches, agency on aging, senior center, County Extension Office, etc.
- Make connections with local media, sharing the monthly *MT Alzheimer's Outreach Update*. Ask local media to regularly donate space/time to share important information.
- Twice yearly evaluate efforts and report back to Communication Committee of Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan Work Group on efforts, feedback, or suggestions.

For details or to sign up as a Community Outreach Volunteer where you live, contact Jennifer Crowley at eagleviewwestlrc1@gmail.com or Whitney Thompson at wthompson@alz.org.

Learn more about the Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan at www.MTAlzPlan.org.

Background info

We've all lost our keys or have forgotten momentarily what we meant to say or do. For most, these small lapses in memory are just that - small lapses in memory. For more 20,000 Montanans, these moments are much more. They are symptoms of a degenerative decline into Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. While most are in their 70's and 80's, approximately five percent are under the age of 65 and living with younger-onset Alzheimer's. They are our parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, neighbors and friends. Another 49,000 Montanans provide their care – often compromising their own health and well-being.

Alzheimer's has been called the epidemic of our generation – affecting an estimated 5.5 million Americans nationwide and calling into service over 15 million family members and friends to provide their care. It is the costliest of all diseases and the only one of the primary diseases that takes people's lives for which we have no treatments, no prevention and no cure. Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are irreversible, progressive brain diseases that affect millions of Americans. These feared diseases slowly destroy brain function, leading to cognitive declines, behavioral disorders and declines in functional abilities. Of the top ten leading causes of death in the nation, Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases are the only ones that cannot be prevented, cured, or significantly delayed. Alzheimer's disease and related dementias place enormous emotional, physical, and financial stress on individuals and their family members.

Montana faces significant public health and financial crises due to the anticipated prevalence of these diseases in the near future. Because Alzheimer's disease and related dementias predominately affect the elderly, we can expect staggering increases in prevalence as the baby boomer generation ages. This will result in enormous impacts on families, caregivers, and health and social service providers, and will cause uncontrolled increases in public health care costs attributed to individuals afflicted with dementia.

Montana's current health care system for persons affected with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is poorly coordinated and supported, does not meet the needs and desires of everyday Montanans, and is financially unsustainable. The state severely lacks in numbers of trained and knowledgeable health care workers, availability of support services for families and caregivers, and appropriate and affordable long-term care settings when necessary.

The Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia State Plan was developed by a group of volunteers from across Montanan and identifies eleven major goals that envision the creation of healthcare system in each community able to manage Alzheimer's disease and related dementias throughout all stages of the disease. Afflicted individuals would be able to experience the highest quality of life while maintaining independence and choice regardless of socio-economic status, rural or urban residence, income, race, or sexual orientation.

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