



State Response to Alzheimer's and Related Dementia

June 2020

Background

Alzheimer's disease affects families and communities throughout Idaho. The brain disorder slowly destroys brain cells, causing a decline in memory, thinking skills, and eventually bodily function. About 27,000 Idahoans live with Alzheimer's or another related dementia, a figure that is projected to increase by more than 22 percent in the next five years. Families often act as caregivers and face tough decisions as the disease progresses and patients lose independence.

A 2011–2012 needs assessment by Boise State University found that most patients want to receive care at home for as long as possible. Families say they want the same thing for their loved ones but often lack necessary support. From behavioral crisis through long-term care, the assessment found several areas where Idaho fell short of meeting patient needs.

Most families pay for residential care costs from their own pockets, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Medicare covers short-term skilled care but not the cost of long-term care in a facility that patients with Alzheimer's disease often eventually need. Medicaid covers certain care costs for those who qualify and is the largest single payer of long-term services and support.

In our 2018 report, *Residential Care*, we reported that Idaho has fewer options to serve hard-to-place people. We found that Idaho's Medicaid reimbursement rate tends to be lower and varies less with need than the neighboring states we used

for comparison. The lower rate is partially driven by state variation in applying for waivers and options from the federal government for home- and community-based services.

The Legislature passed a concurrent resolution in 2012 calling for an informal group of stakeholders called the Idaho Alzheimer's Planning Group to develop a state plan. The informal group did not have a funding mechanism and was not codified through executive order or legislative action though. The group no longer exists, and Idaho does not have an entity charged with executing its 2013 Alzheimer's Plan.

Scope

1. Discuss Idaho's infrastructure for addressing Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.
2. Assess how well state and nonstate efforts coordinate Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.
3. Identify any service gaps that might exist for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.
4. Identify any lessons that Idaho can learn from neighboring states to address the challenges of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

Projected completion date: 2021 legislative session