Grant-funded projects will support people with Alzheimer’s, other forms of dementia

Board on Aging projects nearly 25% increase in diagnoses by 2025

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A dozen Minnesota organizations will be able to increase awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, promote early diagnosis and connect caregivers to resources, thanks to grants from the Minnesota Board on Aging.

The board is granting a total of $741,781.

“Dementia is not a normal part of aging,” said Susan Mezzenga, chair of the Minnesota Board on Aging. “Timely diagnosis using appropriate tools is key to treatment and support.”

An estimated 97,000 Minnesotans over age 65 have Alzheimer’s disease. That number is projected to increase by 24% to 120,000 by 2025. Alzheimer’s poses an array of challenges — emotional, medical, financial and social — to family members of those with the disease. Seventy percent of people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias are cared for in their homes; 75% of that care is given by family, friends and neighbors, according to the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment.

The grant recipients for State Fiscal Year 2021 are:

- **City of Richfield**, $91,740 to raise community awareness of resources and organizations to support people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias while increasing information, education and training to care partners.
- **DARTS**, West St. Paul, $44,550 to increase dementia awareness through community presentations and webinars, offer memory screening opportunities, and establish a Memory Café in Dakota County.
- **FamilyMeans**, Stillwater, $77,086 to create a broad, integrated, accessible continuum of support for families experiencing dementia, enhance services to include web-based options, and prioritize awareness and early identification.
- **First Community Health Organization/The Victory Fund, Duluth**, $75,000 to increase awareness and connection through expansion of the Victory Chorus’s educational outreach, providing social connection, musical outreach, and support networks among choir participants.
- **Giving Voice Initiative**, Bloomington, $49,864 to increase Alzheimer’s disease awareness across the seven-county metro area, specifically within Latino and African American communities.
- **JustUs Health**, St. Paul, $47,320 to promote dementia information and prevention in the LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive communities throughout Minnesota.
- **Koochiching Aging Options**, International Falls, $33,837 to promote participation of persons with dementia in the social and educational benefits of an expanded Memory Café, expand one-on-one...
assistance of a dementia support specialist, assemble and distribute memory kits, and extend education about dementia through Dementia Friends learning sessions targeting business and school communities.

- **Living at Home of the Park Rapids Area**, Park Rapids, $49,569 to increase awareness through Dementia Friends Sessions, Virtual Dementia Tours, and Lunch and Learn modules; a three-day workshop with Teepa Snow’s “Positive Approach to Care” program; distribution of 1,000 resource packets to hospitals, care communities and health fairs; an expanded caregiver coaching program; a new social media presence via a website and Facebook page; and hosting six performances of The Remember Project Dementia Awareness Tour.

- **Northwoods Caregivers**, Bemidji, $114,348 to increase awareness and early identification, and to connect caregivers, including outreach to Native American and LGBT communities, building upon and strengthening partnerships with the Red Lake, White Earth and Leech Lake tribal nations as well as Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College.

- **Senior Community Services**, Minnetonka, $19,635 to fund dementia-friendly services, including Dementia Friends sessions at Wright County senior centers, Memory Cafés, and caregiver consultation and group support.

- **Volunteers of America Minnesota**, Edina, $89,575 to increase awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, and advocate for low-wealth clients and communities of color, provide 280 culturally and linguistically appropriate in-person and online memory screenings to promote early identification, and support 82 caregivers by providing tools and resources.

- **Wadena County Public Health**, Wadena, $49,257 to identify evidence-based staff training to utilize in future presentations to increase awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, implement a community dementia awareness education plan, and to promote screening and early identification of Alzheimer’s and other dementias.