Alzheimer’s Disease and Public Health

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Alzheimer’s Association Perspective - Alzheimer’s is a public health crisis

• Alzheimer’s is the most under-recognized public health crisis of the 21st century

• About 80,000 Oregonians are living with Alzheimer’s (5 million people nationally)

• Alzheimer’s care will cost $2 billion in Oregon in 2013 ($203 billion including $142 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid nationally)
Alzheimer’s Association Perspective - Alzheimer’s is a public health crisis

• Over 165,000 Oregon family members / friends provide **unpaid care** to people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias (15 million nationally)
• Care was valued at over $216 billion in 2012
• Oregon caregivers have over $90 million in additional health care costs due to the physical and emotional toll of caregiving (over $9 billion nationally)
Annual Hospital Stays per 1,000 Seniors

- Individuals without Alzheimer’s and Dementia: 234
- Individuals with Alzheimer’s and Dementia: 780

(Source: 2013 Alzheimer’s Association “Facts and Figures”)
State Plan for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias in Oregon

July 2012
THE HEALTHY BRAIN INITIATIVE

Alzheimer’s Association / CDC partnership

The Healthy Brain Initiative
The Public Health Road Map for State and National Partnerships, 2013–2018
The Public Health Perspective

• Current medical emphasis is on secondary prevention - Slowing progression
  – Symptom management with acknowledgement that progression is inevitable

• Lack of clear data regarding primary public health preventive strategies
The Public Health Perspective

• 2nd most feared illness in the US (behind cancer)

• Data for impacts on community health status is lacking
  – Impact on senior suicide rates is under-researched
  – Impact on health of lay caregivers is unappreciated & under-researched
  – Other....
The Public Health Perspective

• Healthy Lifestyle approaches appear promising – “What’s Good For The Heart Is Good For The Brain”
  – Evidence suggests that Healthy Lifestyle choices may have positive effects above the shoulders too!
The Public Health Perspective

- Critical to improve family / community health perspectives
- Mental / Behavioral health care for patients and caregivers is improving, but far from adequate
- High potential for violence / neglect by family / caregivers
The Public Health Perspective

- Most people with Alzheimer’s have one or more other chronic conditions

- Alzheimer’s complicates the treatment & management of other conditions - and increases care costs

  - A senior with diabetes and Alzheimer’s costs Medicare 81 percent more than a senior who has diabetes but no Alzheimer’s
By 2050 there could be as many as 16 million Americans with Alzheimer’s

Source: Changing the Trajectory of Alzheimer’s Disease
Resources / References

• State Plan for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias in Oregon

• Alzheimer’s Association: 2013 Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures

• WHO: Dementia: A Public health Priority
  http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75263/1/9789241564458_eng.pdf

• CDC: The Healthy Brain Initiative: A National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health
Discussion Items

Traditional Public Health focuses primarily on Communicable Disease and Maternal / Child Health....So....

How do we fit Alzheimer’s and dementia into 21st century Public Health?

– Better epidemiology?
– Community Health Improvement?
– Primary prevention?
– Health of care-givers?
– Other?
Alzheimer’s Disease and Public Health

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