

The CHANGE Act of 2019

THE ALZHEIMER'S CRISIS

With 5.8 million Americans affected by the disease, Alzheimer's is currently our biggest healthcare crisis – economically, socially, and medically. While the latest emerging science – much of which is NIH-supported – indicates that proactive, risk-modifying measures exist that can strengthen brain health and increase resiliency against cognitive decline, Alzheimer's remains the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States and the only top-ten cause of death without an effective treatment or cure.

BRAIN HEALTH

We have learned a great deal in recent years about Alzheimer's disease. Most notably, cognitive decline is no longer an inevitability of aging. In fact, a recent study by the Lancet Commission found that **more than one-third of dementia cases may be preventable**. Emerging scientific evidence shows there are proactive, preventive actions one can take to promote brain health across the lifespan and build cognitive resilience.

BILL SUMMARY

The CHANGE Act takes a targeted approach to addressing our nation's Alzheimer's crisis by encouraging early detection, diagnosis, and access to interventions.

DETECTION AND TREATMENT

Directs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify a uniform, reliable cognitive impairment detection tool or set of tools identified by the National Institutes of Health. Use of these tools will incentivize clinicians to screen, detect and diagnose Alzheimer's and related dementias in their earliest stages. If cognitive impairment is detected, patients are to be referred for additional testing, to community-based support services, and to appropriate clinical trials.

ACCESS TO CARE

Directs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify a uniform, reliable cognitive impairment detection tool or set of tools identified by the National Institutes of Health. Use of these tools will incentivize clinicians to screen, detect and diagnose Alzheimer's and related dementias in their earliest stages. If cognitive impairment is detected, patients are to be referred for additional testing, to community-based support services, and to appropriate clinical trials.

WHY WE NEED CHANGE

New methods to diagnose Alzheimer's well before symptoms emerge are being developed at rapid pace, and CMS has announced plans for 2020 that include financial incentives to screen for and identify individuals with dementias. But, without policies in place to implement these tools, they will never realize their full potential

A shift in the provider system to focus heavily on brain health would spur a new understanding of its importance among Americans. More people will be aware that they may be able to minimize risk and delay the onset of Alzheimer's and other dementias. Moreover, with more Americans being diagnosed earlier and receiving education on the availability of clinical trials, we could see increased participation and diversity in trials, which may accelerate a pharmacological cure for Alzheimer's.