



NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA ALLIANCE ON AGING

Published to Provide Information on Issues Affecting Older Oklahomans

Ken Jones, President

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President's Message

Spring is upon us. Flowers are starting to pop up. Clocks are moving forward. Trees are beginning to bloom. The weather allows us to spend more time outside. It is nature's new beginning.

We have been fighting for over a year this battle with COVID-19. Vaccinations are going up. The number of infections is going down.

I plan to spend more time with those I love as we remember those we lost.

It is a new beginning for all of us. But we continue our battle. We need more funding for long-term care, area agencies on aging and senior nutrition. We need to re-balance our funding to allow more people to age in place. We need to provide safer living conditions for our Older Oklahomans. We need to provide seniors with greater access to healthcare through better broadband. We need to protect the programs we know work, such as the ADvantage Waiver. We need more long-term care beds that are truly prepared to address the needs of our loved ones with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

As we look forward to a safer world, let us remember to visit those vulnerable loved-ones who have been isolated so long. It is time they had a new beginning, too. We have only just begun to count the costs of what COVID-19 has done to our aging Oklahomans.

Join us for a virtual Senior Day at the Capitol, April 12 at 10:30 a.m. Let your voice be heard. This is not an in-person event. Watch our emails for more information on how to register for this event. We will also post a registration link on our website at <https://okallianceonaging.org/>.

OK Department of Human Services Annual Report 2020 Aging Services

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services 2020 Annual report is available on their website at <https://www.ouokdhs.org/s/annualreport2020>. Visit this page for Aging Services Annual report: <https://www.ouokdhs.org/s/annualreport2020/as>.

"In line with our True North strategies, Aging Services (AS) is increasing accessibility to options for older adults to live independently, improving stability of residents in long-term care facilities, meeting basic nutritional needs of older adults, and increasing job opportunities for adults through expanded workforce programs. Aging Services administers community programs that support the rights, independence and quality of life of older Oklahomans and persons with physical disabilities. Many services are provided through the division's largest program, the Medicaid home and community-based ADvantage waiver." — Jeromy Buchanan, Aging Services Director

In this issue...

President's Message	1
DHS Annual Report	1
Senior Day @ Capitol Virtual	2
Alzheimer's Assoc. 2021 Report	3
OK Living Choice Program	4
Aging Partnership Letter	5
Join the Alliance	7

JOIN US VIRTUALLY!

Better Together

2021 SENIOR DAY

APRIL 12, 2021
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Hosted By:

alzheimer's  association®

Sponsor

Oklahoma Aging Partnership



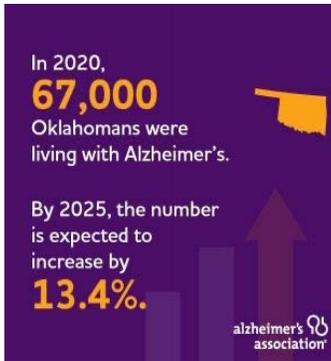
REGISTER TODAY!

For further assistance call 405-943-1895

https://alz-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u2ebGQE1SLyhYAD-LbxuQ

Alzheimer's Association Report Examines the Impact of Alzheimer's and Dementia on Oklahomans and Nation

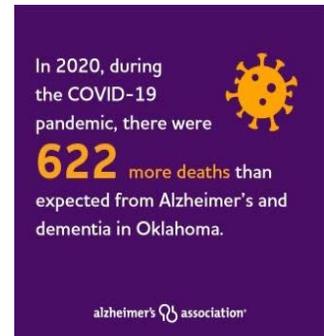
The Alzheimer's Association released its 2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report which provides an in-depth look at the latest statistics and information on Alzheimer's prevalence, incidence, mortality, costs of care and impact on caregivers across the country and in Oklahoma.



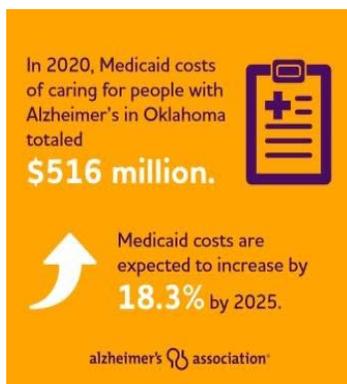
One of the biggest takeaways from this year's report is that the Alzheimer's burden in this country and state continues to grow. More Americans are living with the disease – an estimated 6.2 million Americans age 65 and older have Alzheimer's dementia in 2020, including 67,000 in Oklahoma.

Many family and friends are serving as Alzheimer's caregivers – In Oklahoma, caregivers provided a total of 244 million hours of assistance, valued at \$3.8 billion. In addition, Oklahoma caregivers are ranked 4th nationally in the highest average number of hours per week per caregiver, 53% have chronic health conditions and 27% report depression.

Death rates from Alzheimer's continue to climb. Deaths due to Alzheimer's have increased an alarming 145% since 2000, while deaths for other major diseases remained flat or decreased. As the U.S. population ages, Alzheimer's is becoming a more common cause of death.



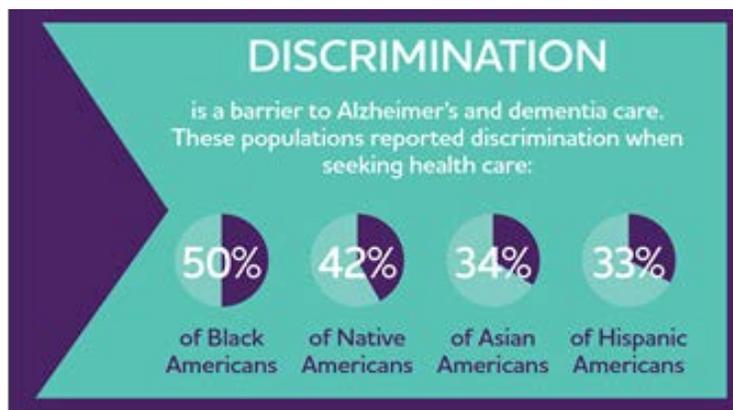
People with Alzheimer's and dementia have been hit hard by COVID-19. There were at least 42,000 more deaths from Alzheimer's and other dementias in 2020 compared to averages over the previous five years – a 16% increase. In Oklahoma there were 622 more deaths from Alzheimer's and dementia in 2020 than compared to averages over the past five years – a 20% increase.



The costs are unsustainable. For the fifth consecutive year the cost of caring for individuals with Alzheimer's is surpassing a quarter of a trillion dollars. Here in Oklahoma the Medicaid costs of caring for people with Alzheimer's are estimated at \$516 million. By 2025, these costs are projected to increase by 18%.

Racial and ethnic attitudes and experiences are examined. Additionally, this year's special report, for the first time ever, examines racial and ethnic attitudes and experiences in regard to Alzheimer's and dementia care. Findings from two nationwide surveys of Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native and White Americans – conducted with U.S. adults and Alzheimer's caregivers specifically – reveal compelling insights on how these groups view Alzheimer's disease, medical research and barriers they face in accessing dementia care.

Health and socioeconomic disparities and systemic racism contribute to increased Alzheimer's and dementia risk in communities of color. Older Blacks and Hispanics are also disproportionately more likely to have Alzheimer's and other dementias. In addition, both groups are more likely to have missed diagnoses than older whites.



Among the report's findings, non-White caregivers, half or more say they have faced discrimination when navigating health care for their care recipient, with the top concern being that providers do not listen to what they are saying because of their race, color or ethnicity.

Nearly two-thirds of Black Americans believe medical research is biased against people of color, and only half of Black Americans trust a future cure for

Alzheimer's will be shared equally with people regardless of race, color or ethnicity.

The Alzheimer's Association Oklahoma Chapter is committed to bridging current gaps to ensure all Oklahoma residents have access to Alzheimer's care and support services.

Findings from the Alzheimer's Association surveys indicate that despite ongoing efforts to address health and health care disparities in Alzheimer's and dementia care, there is still much work to do.

About the Alzheimer's Association: The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia – by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. For more information, visit alz.org or call the 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.

Oklahoma Living Choice Program

Do you have a loved one in a nursing facility that needs assistance transitioning back into the community? Oklahoma Living Choice Program may be what you are looking for. The Oklahoma Living Choice Program assists Oklahomans wanting to transition out of a nursing home and back into the community in a residence of their own. The populations served are individuals 65 and over, and individuals 19 and up with a physical disability.

To qualify for the Oklahoma Living Choice Program one should meet the following:

- Be at least 19 years of age
- Qualify for SoonerCare (Oklahoma's Medicaid Program) for at least one day prior to transition
- Have lived in an institutional setting (nursing home) for at least 90 consecutive days
- Voluntarily want to transition back into the community
- Be willing to play an active role in his/her plan of care

Depending on the individual's needs there are many services that the Oklahoma Living Choice Program offers, such as: assistance finding a new home, home delivered meals, transportation, skilled nursing, therapy services, personal care, medication management, and there are transitional funds (a one-time allotment of up to \$2,400).

Anyone can refer a potential individual that resides in a nursing home for the Oklahoma Living Choice Program by accessing the online referral form <http://www.okhca.org/ReferralHome.aspx?ref=LC>. If you need more information or have questions about the Oklahoma Living Choice Program you can contact 888-287-2443 or email Oklahoma.livingchoice@okhca.org



Oklahoma Aging Partnership

Oklahoma Alliance on Aging
Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature Alumni Association
Oklahoma State Council on Aging

2021 Letter to Legislators

March 03, 2021

Dear Legislator,

The Oklahoma Aging Partnership (OAP) is a non-partisan coalition comprised of the Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, the Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature Alumni Association and the Oklahoma State Council on Aging. Collectively, the OAP has identified key pieces of proposed legislation that will positively or negatively impact older Oklahomans. The collective decision to support or oppose legislation was made based on the current version of the bills as of March 2, 2021. We will appreciate your support of the Aging Partnership's positions and welcome your questions.

OAP SUPPORTS:

House Bill 1019 (Rep. Rande Worthen) – Requires insurance carriers to cap copayments for a 30-day supply of any type of insulin at an amount not to exceed \$100, regardless of the amount or type of insulin needed. The bill also authorizes insurance carriers to reduce copayment amounts below the cap. The measure requires the Insurance Commissioner to enforce compliance of the cap on copayments and authorizes the Commissioner to promulgate rules, as necessary.

House Bill 1794 (Rep. Nicole Miller and Sen. Adam Pugh) – Directs that any long-term care provider or retirement community that advertises care or treatment of people with Alzheimer's Disease or other forms of Dementia to disclose the nature of that care on a Disclosure Form required by the State Department of Health. **The bill's current language is widely supported by aging advocates and is a priority bill for the Oklahoma Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and the OAP.**

House Bill 1845 (Rep. Andy Fugate and Sen. J.A. Dossett) – Requires a vehicle's headlamps to be on at all times during inclement weather. **This bill continues to be a priority issue of the Oklahoma Silver-Haired Legislature and is strongly supported by the OAP.** Older Oklahomans need this extra safety measure.

House Bill 1877 (Rep. Tammy West and Sen. Bill Coleman) – Modifies the criteria for use of an anti-psychotic drug for A Resident of an Assisted Living facility or a nursing facility. This bill builds on law passed in 2019.

House Bill 2544 (Rep. Preston Stinson) – Modifies the crimes for which persons shall be required to serve not less than 85% of their sentence to include abuse of any vulnerable adult, **not just those who are nursing home facility residents.**

House Bill 2649 (Rep. Jon Echols and Sen. Tom Dugger) – Creates the OK Durable Medical Equipment Licensing Act which requires providers of durable medical equipment to be licensed.

HB 2644 (Rep. Jon Echols) – Would allow Virtual meetings of public bodies until March 31, 2024. This bill is supportive of Older Oklahomans who serve on public bodies, even when there is not a public health emergency.

Senate Bill 58 (Sen. Dave Rader and Rep. Jon Echols) – Exempts practitioners from the electronic prescription requirements when ordering a controlled, dangerous substance to be administered through the hospice program.

Senate Bill 198 (Sen. Paul Rosino and Rep. Mark Lawson) – Relates to determining the “least restrictive alternative” in the OK Guardianship and Conservatorship Act, in order that fewer rights of the person are restricted than would be restricted if a guardian or conservator were appointed for the person.

Senate Bill 388 (Sen. Paul Rosino and Rep. Josh West) – Adds Advanced Practice Registered Nurse to the practitioners who can administer care in home settings.

OAP OPPOSES:

Senate Bill 42 (Sen. Dave Rader and Rep. Sheila Dills) – This bill expands exemptions in the Home Care Act to allow more home care agency staff to work without Oklahoma certification/licensure. Such an exemption would place more frail, vulnerable Older Oklahomans at risk of neglect and other harm from loosely supervised personnel sent to their homes to provide “care”. Training and certification of staff who work in elders’ homes is vital for the protection of these vulnerable Oklahomans.

Senate Bill 689 (Sen. Adam Pugh) – Modifies membership of the Advisory Committee on Medical Care for Public Assistance Recipients (MAC) at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. This bill deletes Consumer representation from organizations for the Elderly, Children, persons with Developmental Disabilities, specific others, and one of the two Nursing Home associations (profit or non-profit?) from membership. The OAP strongly opposes this bill.

Senate Bill 820 (Sen. Adam Pugh and Rep. Marcus McEntire) – This bill “declassifies” multiple State Department of Health positions, including those personnel who are categorized as “Investigators”. The Oklahoma Aging Partnership organizations oppose the removal from Classified (protected) service of ANY State employee who investigates complaints or crimes, inspects facilities, agencies or businesses that are licensed by the State, or advocates for the rights of vulnerable Oklahomans of any type. Such positions in any State Agency should not be subject to removal of an incumbent for political reasons, or due to political pressure, or for any reason other than Cause. The Merit System provides protections for State Employees whose jobs involve protection of Oklahoma Citizens. Those Employee Protections should not be removed. OAP also opposes similar bills, including Senate Bills 232 and 876. Those of us who lived under a “patronage” system in the past know we should not return to those times.

Senate Bill 913 (Sen. Julie Daniels and Rep. Tom Gann) – Provides for the Legislature to repeal an agency rule by joint resolutions and removes the Governor’s authority to repeal agency rules by declaration. The measure also directs the President Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House to establish a Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. The Joint Committee shall consider proposed rules, amending rules, and repeal requests submitted by an agency. Those rules approved by the Committee shall be presented to the Legislature for final approval for repeal. Emergency rules must be sent to the Chairs of the Joint Committee in addition to the other recipients outlined in current law. The measure creates a new section of law in the Act by providing for the expedited repeal of rules beginning September 1, 2021.

BILLS OF CONCERN:

House Bill 1677 (Rep. Marilyn Stark and Sen. Darrell Weaver) and

House Bill 2566 (Rep. Chad Caldwell and Sen. Greg McCortney)

These bills both attempt to address the important issue of social isolation that many Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities have experienced during the past year, due to COVID-19 restrictions on visitation. They both attempt to address access issues for family and friends of Residents and contract services hired to support Residents in such facilities. But each bill raises concerns related to “assigning” care-giving responsibilities to “compassionate caregivers” without reaffirming the facility’s responsibility to provide staff adequate in training and numbers to meet the needs of ALL the Residents. In addition, both bills allow a Resident’s designated representative to prohibit the Resident to receive a visitor even though such a restriction of visitation can only be made by the Resident, herself, or by a Judge in a guardianship, under Oklahoma law. Restriction of visitors by family members can lead to extreme emotional suffering for Residents, including in situations involving stepfamilies and family feuds. Please do not permit that language to remain in these bills.

Join the Alliance...

Together we make a difference! The Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, a 501(c) (3), is a statewide non-partisan coalition. The Mission of the Alliance is to identify the needs of aging Oklahomans, to educate on issues, and to advocate for solutions.

As a member, YOU stay informed on issues pertaining to aging Oklahomans. YOU receive a quarterly newsletter, participate in an annual survey on issues, and have an opportunity to attend Education and Strategy committee meetings. The Alliance gives YOU a voice in identifying and prioritizing concerns and issues while following legislation.

Membership Application: (check one or more)

(Contributions above basic dues are **tax deductible** to the extent allowed by law.)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$25) |
| Organizational | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (Over \$100) |
| Sponsors | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 or more | |
| Donation | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |
| Endowment Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ (any amount is appreciated!) | |

Please designate representative to attend meetings and receive mailings.

Names: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please let us know if you would like to:

Volunteer

(Area of interest) _____

Work on a committee

(Area of interest)

Sponsorship Application: (check one)

- \$200 Newsletter** **\$50 full-page** **\$30 half page**

Help the Alliance by sponsoring the newsletter yourself or finding someone, an organization or business, to be a sponsor. By becoming a sponsor, you:

- Ensure copies of the newsletter are distributed across the state
- Are recognized in the newsletter edition you sponsor (your name or your organization's name, whichever you prefer)

Contact the Alliance office for details! Call 405-943-1895.

MAIL TO: P.O. Box 12008, OKC, OK 73157



Oklahoma Alliance on Aging
 PO Box 12008
 Oklahoma City, OK 73157
www.okallianceonaging.org

Email: Marietta.OAOA@gmail.com

Call: (405) 943-1895

Hours: M, W, and F from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 Marietta Real, Executive Director (PT)

Officers

- Ken Jones, President (2020-2022)
- Esther Houser, 1st Vice President (2020-2022)
- Janet Moore, 2nd Vice President (2020-2022)
- Annette Mays, Secretary, Treasurer (2020-2022)

Board of Directors

- Mary Brinkley, Leading AgeOK
- BJ Mooney, DOC Services
- Trish Emig, Strategy Committee
- Natalie Bingham, Individual
- Anne Davis, Individual

Volunteer: Wanda DeBruler, Newsletter

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Find. Learn. Give.

View our complete profile at
GiveSmartOKC
 Know More. Give More.
GiveSmartOKC.org

A project of the
 OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2021 CALENDAR
Mark the Dates

Meetings, 3rd Tuesday of the Quarterly month:

- June 15, 2021
- September 21, 2021
- December 21, 2021

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 (If a speaker is scheduled the program time is 1:00 pm.)

Location: The Daily Living Center, Board Room
 3000 N. Rockwell, Bethany, OK

If you are not a member, please join.