

Executive Summary: Place & Brain Health Equity

A Data Brief on Congressional Districts and Alzheimer's Prevalence among Communities of Color

Factors outside of our health care system—where people are born, live, learn, work, and play—affect our health and the health of our communities. Public policy has been slow to catch up, causing a ripple effect of systemic inequities, especially in brain health among Latino and Black Americans. Brain health is the ability to think clearly, learn, and remember. It also includes motor and emotional functioning—all important components of performing everyday activities.

Alzheimer's among Latino and Black Americans has shown that brain health is interlinked with the social determinants of health (SDOH). This is clear from a close look at the counties most impacted by Alzheimer's among communities of color.

CONGRESSIONAL HOT SPOTS BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Districts*	41
Total Number of People Living with ADRD**	347,610
Total Medicare FFS Costs Spent on Beneficiaries living with ADRD in 2016**	\$8.5 billion
Average ADRD District Prevalence in 2016**	9.50%
Average Percentage of District Medicare FFS Dollars Spent on Beneficiaries living with ADRD in 2016**	26%

*Number of Districts That Represent the 25 Counties with the Highest Rates of ADRD Among Blacks and Latinos, Medicare Fee for Service, 2016

**Medicare Fee for Service, 2016

The Social Determinants of Brain Health

Where people live matters when it comes to understanding and addressing health disparities. Social determinants of health (SDOH) can have a profound effect on a person's health, including their risk for Alzheimer's disease.

This data brief identifies the congressional districts that overlap with the 25 counties with the highest prevalence of Alzheimer's among Black and Latino Americans across the United States. It highlights the systemic inequities prevalent in these counties and makes recommendations for policymakers to advance brain health equity in hard-hit communities.

A place-based approach that integrates the social determinants of health can help regional healthcare providers and public health departments shape the development of culturally – and geographically – tailored interventions, including improvements in clinical practice and more equitable research strategies to improve brain health.

There has never been a more urgent time to reduce Alzheimer's in communities of color. If nothing is done, it's projected that by 2030 nearly 40 percent of all Americans living with Alzheimer's will be Latino or Black.

Four policy actions can better target **research investment, improve access to healthcare, and promote public health** interventions for under-resourced communities.

1. **Invest in public health, treatment, and research infrastructure** in communities hard-hit by Alzheimer's and related dementias.
2. **Invest in educational and economic opportunity** to reduce social inequities.
3. **Establish an ambitious national goal to prevent Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and address disparities in early intervention and diagnosis.**
4. **Collect better data to identify and address gaps in access** to Alzheimer's health services and research for underserved communities.



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