

Panhandle

Public Health District

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For Immediate Release:

Panhandle Public Health District awarded grant to address brain health in the Panhandle

Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) announced it has been selected by the Alzheimer's Association and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for the Healthy Brain Initiative. The initiative will allow PPHD to enhance its capacity to address brain health and dementia for the citizens of the Nebraska Panhandle.

"PPHD wants communities to know that just because aging cannot be stopped, there is still something they can do about their cognitive health. Early detection might not improve the quantity of life, but it can certainly improve the quality," said Paulette Schnell, PPHD Deputy Director of Clinical Services.

PPHD's focus area for the Healthy Brain Initiative is early diagnosis and detection. Their efforts will include these specific outcomes:

- increasing integration with other chronic disease efforts by training our current health educators,
- increasing public knowledge about brain health, risk factors for dementia and benefits of early detection and diagnosis,
- and reduce the stigma and bias about cognitive decline.

There is a stigma and misinformation around Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. PPHD aims to start conversations in the vast rural area about early detection and address any barriers as they come up.

"The Nebraska Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is honored and excited to work alongside PPHD as they implement public health strategies that promote brain health and address dementia. We know public health departments play a critical role in advancing the health and safety of individuals across our state, and just as we address other public health issues, it is essential that we advocate for the brain health of Nebraskans," said Sadie Hinkel, Program Director with the Nebraska Alzheimer's Association.

Panhandle Public Health District was one of 10 grantees in the cohort. The recipients include:

- Clay County Health Department (Illinois)
- Davis County Health Department (Utah)
- Kitsap Public Health District (Washington)
- Lamar County Health Department (Georgia)
- Nelson-Griggs District Health Unit (North Dakota)
- Northeast Tri County Health District (Washington)

- Oneida County Health Department (Wisconsin)
- Panhandle Public Health District (Nebraska)
- Pharr Department of Health (Texas)
- Waukesha County Public Health (Wisconsin)

People living with dementia and their caregivers require support as cognitive, behavioral and physical functioning changes over time. A strategic public health response is needed to mitigate this impact on all communities, and the addition of the Healthy Brain Initiative will help to improve the Panhandle's response. People over 65 make up 20% of the total Panhandle population. One in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead 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®. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities. For more information about NACCHO, please visit naccho.org.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.ne.gov.