

Newly Funded Alzheimer's and Dementia Research Center in Utah



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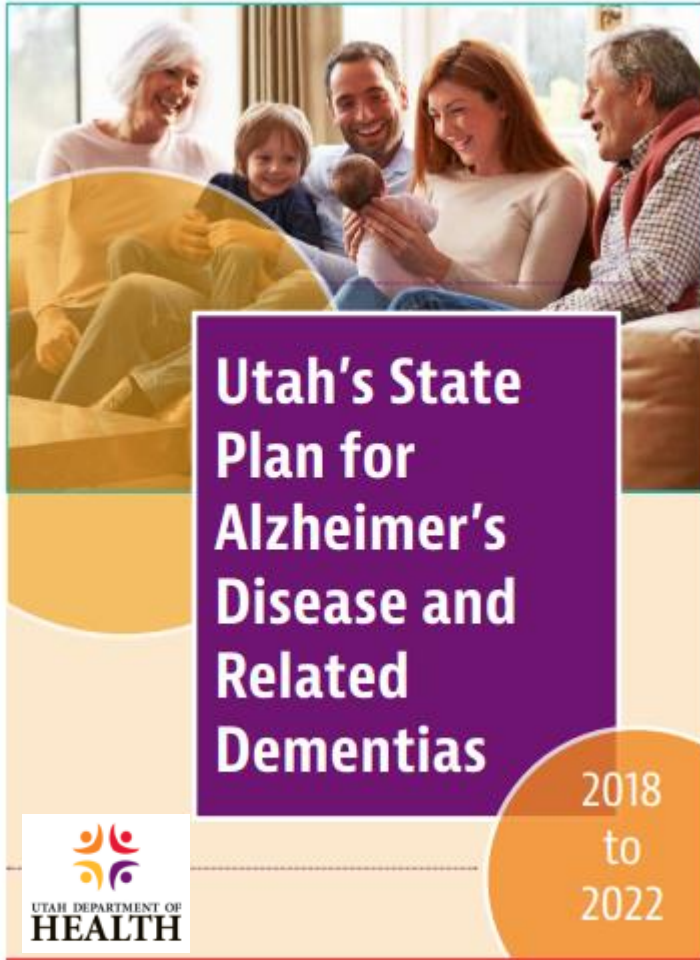
Presentation at the Quarterly Meeting of the Utah Geriatrics & Gerontology Society

July 19, 2022



State Plan

Prepared by the **UT Department of Health**
with funding from the **Utah State Legislature**
2023 forthcoming



STATE PLAN GOALS

1: Dementia-aware UT

2: Support and empower family and other dementia caregivers

3: Dementia-competent workforce

4: Expanded research in Utah

Recommendation 4B: Advocate for research funding.

Short Term (1-2 Years):

Advocate to **support the expansion and collaboration, recruitment, and retention of world-class researchers.**

Intermediate Term (2-3 Years)

Advocate for **funding to support dementia related research** by entities within Utah.

Long Term Goals (5+ Years)

Pursue federal funding to support dementia related research by entities within Utah.

Ensure that the most promising **evidence-based research projects are advanced and sustainable**, including but not limited to research on **prevention, treatment, and finding a cure** for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Plan: Advocate for **funding to support dementia related research** by entities within Utah.

2022 Legislative Session

- **Sponsor:**

- Representative Dan Johnson – District 4

- **Lobbyist work:**

- Jeremy Cunningham & Ronnie Daniels (Alzheimer's Association Utah Chapter)
- David Butterfield (Utah State University)

- **Presentation to Higher Education Subcommittee:**

- Dan Johnson, Ronnie Daniels, and Beth Fauth (USU)

- **Starting July 1, 2022: \$850,000 ongoing funds**

Three areas of impact



Innovative Research



Supportive Services



Dementia-competent Workforce



Innovative Research

Funding Goals: Build infrastructure fostering collaboration across disciplines & across the state

- “Cross-pollinate” across disciplines & research approaches
- Research ↔ Practice
 - Research informs practice, practice informs research
 - Program evaluation
- Enhance research partnerships
 - Department of Health
 - Utah universities
 - Private industry
- Reach rural areas: Collaborate with USU Extension to access rural counties for research

USU support:

- “R1”: *highest tier* designation for a research university
- Fits with USU’s mission as a land-grant institution to disseminate research to the citizens of the state
- Current dementia research in **multiple individual departments**



Innovative Research: Funding Examples

- 2022-2023 Faculty Fellowships with the College of Education and Human Services



Neuroscience specializations:

- Studies how brain cells receive specific signals and modify their activity

Prior work:

- Cellular communication problems, including in diseases like Parkinson's & Schizophrenia

Fellowship:

- In mice that carry three genetic mutations known to cause Alzheimer's disease
- Observe cellular communication (normative and problematic) throughout the mouse lifespan
- Assess how communication is related to developing Alzheimer's related beta amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles.

[Dr. Mona Buhusi](#)

Associate Professor in Psychology
Utah State University



Innovative Research: Funding Examples

Plan: Advocate to **support the expansion and collaboration, recruitment, and retention of world-class researchers.**
Pursue federal funding to support dementia related research by entities within Utah.

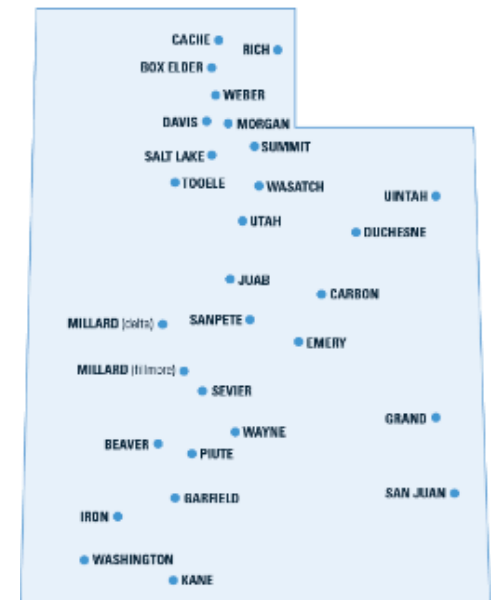
- Pilot funding/Small grant funding:
 - Within USU (any department)
 - Across the state
 - Equipment
- Provide grant mentorship opportunities
 - Hanover: Grant Academy
- Conferences and Workshops
 - Sponsor/Co-sponsorship
 - Multiple institutions
 - County conferences via Extension
- Research Registry: Dr. JoAnn Tschanz (Psychology, USU)
 - National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center's (NACC) Uniform Dataset (UDS) battery
 - Tiered system of engagement
 - Connect to Utah Population Database



Supportive Services for People with Dementia and Caregivers

Funding Goals: Connecting and expanding supportive services

- **Prioritize gaps in service:**
 - Working with Utah Commission on Aging, Coordinating Council, UGGS, et al.
 - Subcontract with supportive services: **Alzheimer's Association Utah Chapter** position
- Integrate with **Sorensen Center for Clinical Excellence**
 - Northern Utah and Telehealth infrastructure
 - Financial counseling center
 - Caregiver experts
 - Family and mental health
 - Prevention/intervention structures within USU Extension
 - Communications Disorders
 - Cognitive assessment **
 - Referrals first
- Further reach into rural areas: **Support for USU Extension**



USU Extension Locations



Training a Dementia-competent Workforce

Funding Goals: Promote dementia-competence across occupations

- *Logan Campus, Regional campuses, Online*
- Foster student practicum opportunities (statewide)
 - Social Work
 - Nutrition
 - Public Health
 - Psychology
 - Human Development & Family Studies
 - Business
 - Nursing
 - more
- Train existing workers (not students) in Alzheimer's and related dementias
- Conference and workshops, continue education, on and off campus

External Advisory:



Innovative Research



Supportive Services



Dementia-competent Workforce

UT Coordinating Council: Kristy Russell and Co-chairs

1: Dementia-aware UT

2: Support and empower family and other dementia caregivers

3: Dementia-competent workforce

4: Expanded research in Utah

Final thoughts...

- Job opportunities (beth.fauth@usu.edu)
 - Post-doctoral Fellowship
 - Alzheimer's Association position
 - Communications and Coordinator position
- **Thank your Utah legislators:** let them know you support and can engage with this opportunity
- Building infrastructure and collaboration: reach out to me!
- Twitter @ADRC_USU
 - Forward me your news stories to share