



Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias

Supporting patients, families, and other caregivers

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are a growing concern in Washington State and around the country. Symptoms include difficulty with memory, cognition, and social functioning that are difficult for patients themselves, family members and friends, and the health care system at large. In many cases no clear guidelines exist to support the patient through diagnosis and increase in symptoms.

The goal of our recommendations are to support patients, their family members, and other caregivers across the disease process.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

I. Diagnosis

- Using a two-stage diagnosis process.
- Cognitive impairment is detected with a brief (<5 minutes), validated tool, and direct observation or report.
- Positive finding followed by additional evaluation and confirmation.

II. Ongoing Care and Support

- Patients and family are supported by care team including connection to community supports and care management.
- Further assessment and management of comorbid diagnosis.

III. Advance Care Planning and Palliative Care

- Advance care planning conversations and completion of advance directive.
- Consideration of palliative and hospice care.

IV. Need for Increased Support and/or Higher Levels of Care

- Monitoring of cognitive impairment, behavioral symptoms, functional impairment.
- Patients and family members have a plan if cognitive decline and care is more than can be managed safely at home with current supports.
- Consideration for caregiver stress and capacity.

V. Preparing for Potential Hospitalization

- Discussion of preference for hospital care
- Understanding of red flags.
- Hospital staff aware of diagnosis, appropriate discharge planning.

VI. Screening for Delirium Risk

- Appropriate hospital patients screened for risk of delirium.
- Steps to minimize risk, manage delirium.

FOR PROVIDERS, PRACTICES, AND SYSTEMS

Follow our roadmap for implementation that outlines the patient perspective for optimal care alongside operational details for each of the six focus areas. We walk through the current state, intermediate steps toward implementation of the recommendations, and a description of optimal care.

Read our Report
www.breecollaborative.org/topic-areas/alzheimers/