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## **New Alzheimer's Association Report: Americans Value Brain Health but Lack Guidance**

— *Clifton Park healthcare professional shares personal story of protecting brain health* —

**ALBANY, N.Y. (April 21, 2026)** — Americans say brain health is as important as physical health as they age, yet most do not know how to protect it, according to the [Alzheimer's Association's 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures](#) report and a nationwide survey released today by the Alzheimer's Association.

The annual report provides an in-depth look at the latest national and state-by-state data on Alzheimer's prevalence, mortality, dementia care workforce, costs of care and impact on caregivers. New disease-related statistics for New York State revealed the following:

- Number of New York State residents aged 65 and older living with Alzheimer's: **426,500**
- Statewide deaths from Alzheimer's disease: **3,204**
- Statewide mortality rate from Alzheimer's (per 100,000 people): **16.1**
- Number of New York State residents serving as unpaid family caregivers: **776,000**
- Total hours of unpaid care provided: **1.3B**
- Total value of unpaid care: **\$33.8B**

“The latest data show Alzheimer's remains a growing challenge for families in Northeastern New York,” said David Sobel, executive director for the Northeastern New York Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. “That's why it's critical to keep advancing research and developing treatments that can improve outcomes and support everyone facing the disease, including people with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their families in New York State.”

Nationally, the impact of Alzheimer's continues to grow. An estimated 7.4 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's. Annual care costs, excluding unpaid caregiving, are projected to reach \$409 billion this year. Nearly 13 million family members and friends provided more than 19 billion hours of unpaid care last year. Since 2000, U.S. deaths from Alzheimer's have increased 134%.

An accompanying special report, *Brain Health in America: Understanding and Supporting Lifelong Cognitive Health*, highlights survey findings from more than 3,800 adults age 40 and older. Nearly all respondents said brain health is at least as important as physical health, yet only 9% said they know a lot

about how to maintain it. More than two-thirds reported worrying about their brain health or developing dementia.

Jennifer Pettis, MS, RN, CNE, of Clifton Park is a gerontological nurse and director of strategic alliances at the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), so she has years of experience working with people living with dementia. She knew exercise was a key part of Alzheimer's risk reduction and aging in general but struggled to find the right fit. That is, until she discovered Pilates, which she says hits the "sweet spot" for "brain insurance."

"Pilates is social, challenging and fun, and a class is an hour a day to focus on me and not my busy life," Pettis says. "The deep focus required to master Pilates movements keeps my mind sharp while the controlled breathing reduces the stress that can damage brain health. By building my balance, strength and mental clarity today, I feel like I'm giving my future self the best gift possible: a strong body and a resilient mind."

While most adults believe healthy lifestyle behaviors support brain health, fewer make the connection to reducing dementia risk. Three-quarters said behaviors such as diet, exercise and sleep are important for brain health, but less than half strongly linked those habits to lowering their risk of Alzheimer's or other types of dementia.

To address the needs identified in the survey, the Alzheimer's Association is working with partners to deliver research-backed information and programs to help people support their brain health across community, workplace and health care settings. These efforts are informed by the landmark [U.S. POINTER study](#), which found that combining multiple healthy habits can protect cognition function.

The full 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report is available at [alz.org/facts](https://alz.org/facts) and will be published in the April 2026 issue of *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*.

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#### **About 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures**

The Alzheimer's Association 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report is a comprehensive compilation of national statistics and information on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The report conveys the impact of Alzheimer's on individuals, families, government and the nation's health care system. Since its 2007 inaugural release, the report has become the preeminent source covering the broad spectrum of Alzheimer's issues. The Facts and Figures report is an official publication of the Alzheimer's Association. The report is published annually in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*.

#### **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](https://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.