



Brain Health Workshop

For Healthcare Providers, Educators, &
Community Leaders

March 19, 2026

Kris Lonsway, PhD.
Founder & President, OptWell

Visit: www.optwell.org



Workshop Objectives

Increase understanding of brain health, biomarkers, early intervention, risk reduction, and available resources so attendees can:

- Promote brain-healthy lifestyle habits and behaviors for any age
- Make high-quality referrals to expert providers and community resources

Thank You Sponsors



Community
Memorial
Foundation



Supported by a grant from the **Illinois Brain Health Project**

My "Why"



OptWell
choosing healthy. thriving together.

OptWell inspires health & wellness in Chicago's western suburbs



OptWell's Vision:

A community where **prevention** and evidence-based **healthy habits** enable everyone to improve their **quality of life**.



Eat Well



Get Moving



Mental Wellness



Quality Sleep



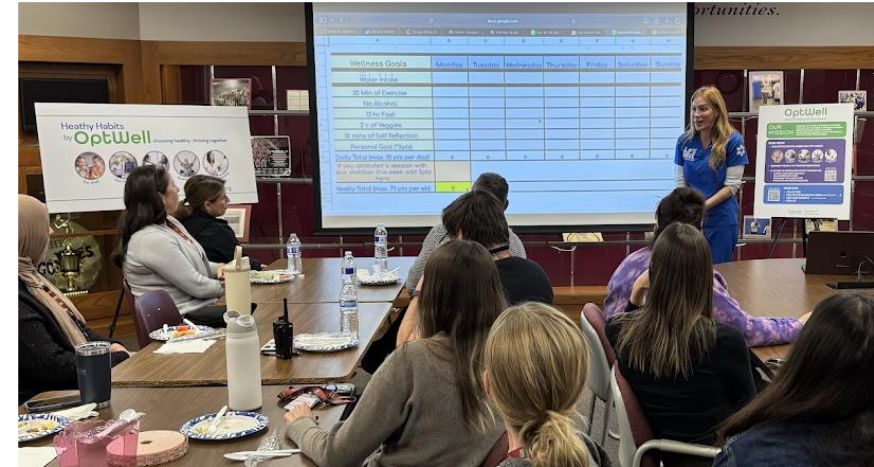
Manage Health

Healthy Habits



Mindful Movement Sessions

Employee Wellness Challenges



Education & Wellness Events



Brain Health, Early Intervention, Biomarkers & Community Collaboration



Olivia Matongo

Vice President, Program Services, Alzheimer's Association

**Overview of brain health basics,
early signs, and modifiable risk
factors**



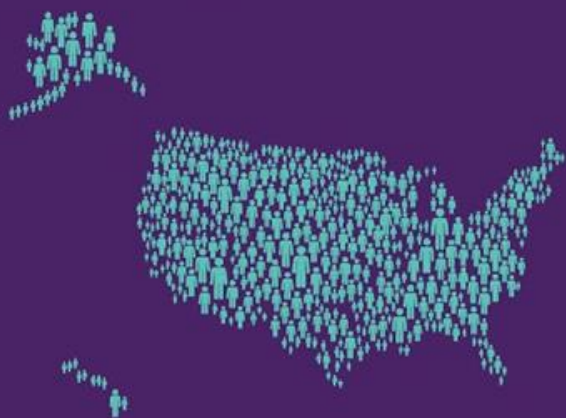
Supporting **Brain Health** in Our Community

www.alz.org/hello



2025 ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FACTS AND FIGURES

Over
7 MILLION
Americans are living with
Alzheimer's



1 IN 3

older adults dies
with Alzheimer's or
another dementia



while deaths
from
Alzheimer's
disease have
increased

142%

Between
2000 and
2022 deaths
from heart
disease have
decreased

2.1%



**NEARLY
12
MILLION**

Americans provide
unpaid care for people
with Alzheimer's or
other dementias

These caregivers
provided more than
19 billion hours
valued at nearly

**\$413
BILLION**



IT KILLS MORE THAN

breast cancer



prostate cancer

COMBINED

In 2025, Alzheimer's
and other dementias
will cost the nation

**\$384
BILLION**

By 2050,
these costs
could rise to nearly

**\$1
TRILLION**



The lifetime
risk for Alzheimer's
at age 45 is

1

IN

5

for
women

1

IN

10

for
men

**UP TO
4 IN 5**

Americans feel
optimistic about new
Alzheimer's treatments
in the next decade



of Americans would
want a medication to
slow the progression of
Alzheimer's following
a diagnosis

2025 ILLINOIS ALZHEIMER'S STATISTICS



MORTALITY

of Deaths from
Alzheimer's Disease (2022)

4,111

Alzheimer's Disease as
Cause of Death Rank

7th

PREVALENCE

Number of People
Aged 65 and Older
with Alzheimer's (2020)

250,600

% of Adults Over 65
with Alzheimer's

12.0%

WORKFORCE

of Geriatricians
in 2021

303

Increase Needed to
Meet 2050 Demand

27.7%

of Home Health
and Personal Care
Aides in 2022

108,190

Increase Needed to
Meet 2032 Demand

14.8%

CAREGIVING

of Caregivers

316,000

Total Hours
of Unpaid Care

488M

Total Value
of Unpaid Care

\$12.5B

Caregivers with Chronic
Health Conditions

64.2%

Caregivers
with Depression

29.0%

HEALTH CARE

of People in Hospice
(2017) with a Primary
Diagnosis of Dementia

9,795

Hospice Residents
with a Primary Diagnosis
of Dementia

18%

of Emergency
Department Visits per
1,000 People with
Dementia (2018)

1,624

Dementia Patient
Hospital Readmission
Rate (2018)

23.4%

Medicaid Costs of
Caring for People with
Alzheimer's (2025)

\$2.4B

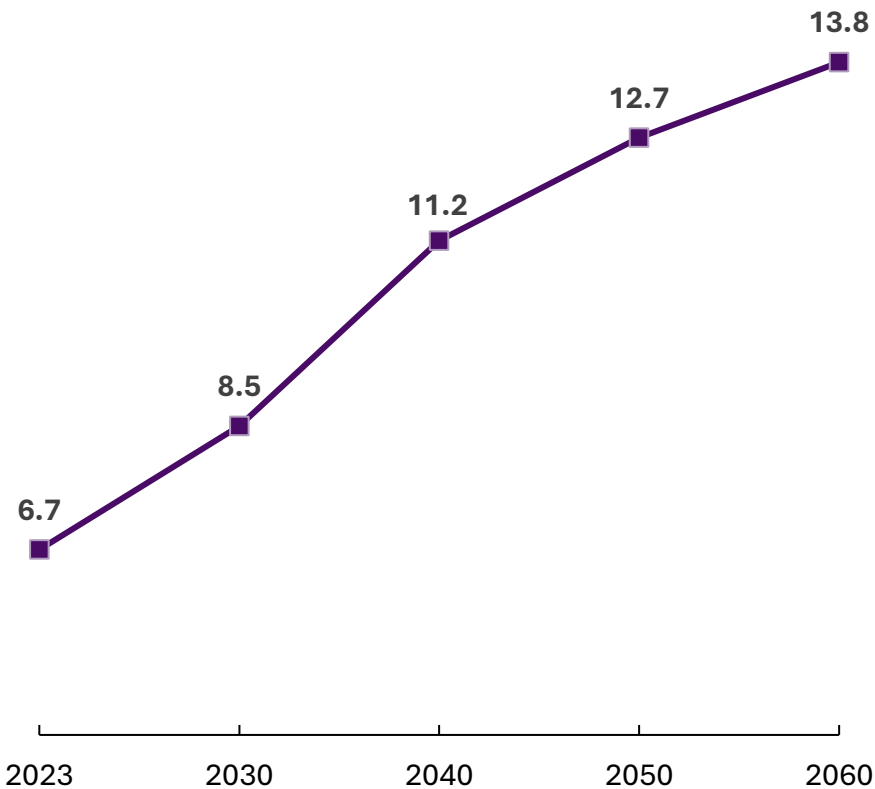
Per Capita Medicare
Spending on People with
Dementia in 2024 Dollars

\$35,770

Urgency for Brain Health Promotion



Millions of Americans Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer's



Projected prevalence is based on studies of current/recent older Americans — a group that lived through a time of lower rates of obesity and diabetes.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association leads 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[®].



Cognitive Decline

Cognitive decline refers to changes in memory, thinking, and/or reasoning that are worsening over time.



Dementia

An umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities **severe enough to interfere with daily life**. Dementia is NOT a normal part of aging.

Alzheimer's

Vascular

Lewy body

Frontotemporal

Other, including Huntington's

Mixed dementia: from more than one cause

What is **Alzheimer's**?



Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes problems with **memory, thinking and behavior**. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks.



Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, where **symptoms gradually worsen** over a number of years.



In the early stage, memory loss is mild. But as the disease progresses, **individuals will need around-the-clock care**. The disease is ultimately fatal.





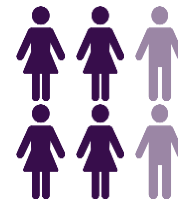
Populations at **Higher Risk**

2X

Black Americans are about **twice as likely** as White Americans to have Alzheimer's or another dementia.



Hispanic Americans are **one and a half times** as likely to have the disease as White Americans.



Almost **two-thirds** of Americans living with Alzheimer's are women.



10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks

4. Confusion with time or place

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

8. Decreased or poor judgment

9. Withdrawal from work or social activities

10. Changes in mood and personality

Early Detection and Treatment



Early detection is important, **pay attention to any changes in memory, thinking or behavior** that you notice in yourself or someone else.



There are treatments that can change disease progression, and drug and non-drug options that may help treat symptoms. **Talk to your doctor to learn more about treatment options.**



We all deserve a life with the
healthiest brain possible.

We can all take actions to help
protect our brain health.



Risks to Brain Health

In most cases, Alzheimer's is the result of complex interactions across multiple factors.

Non-modifiable

Ones we cannot change

- » Age
- » Genetics
- » Family history

Modifiable

Ones we can change!

- » Certain health conditions
- » Health behaviors

10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN



**Protect your
head**



**Be smoke-
free**



Get moving



**Challenge
your mind**



**Control your
blood pressure**



**Manage
diabetes**



Sleep well



**Stay in
school**



Eat right



**Maintain a
healthy weight**

Why these

10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN

?

Currently, these risk factors have the strongest levels of evidence.

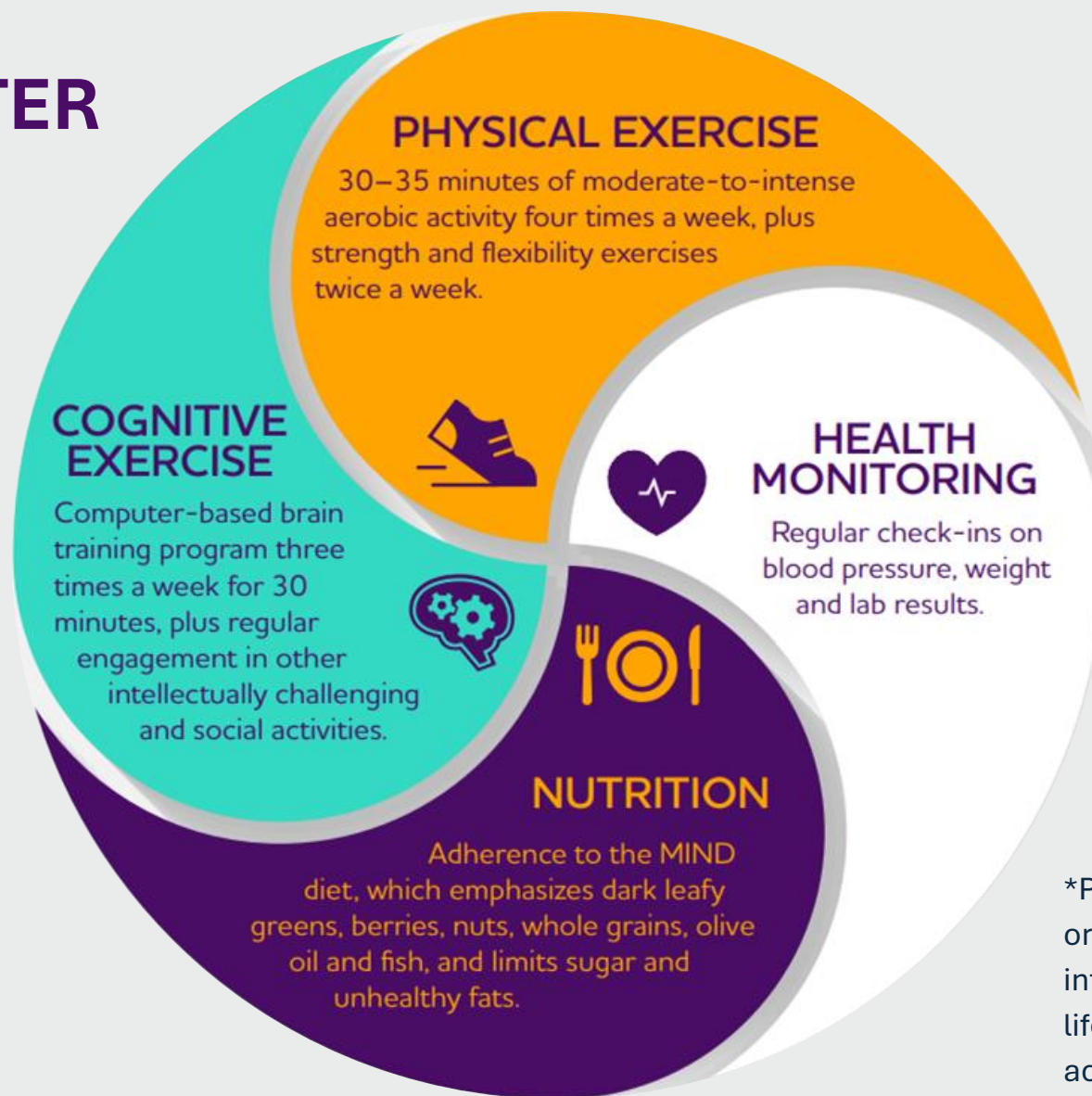
There may be other risks to brain health but the current body of science is lower or unclear. Exciting research is exploring many topics, including hearing and vision loss, stress, air pollution.

Learn more alz.org/healthyhabits



The first large-scale, randomized controlled trial in the U.S. to evaluate whether addressing several lifestyle factors at the same time – diet, exercise, cognitive stimulation, and heart health – can protect cognitive function in older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline.

THE U.S. POINTER BRAIN HEALTH RECIPE*



*Participants followed either a self-guided or structured lifestyle program. The two interventions both focused on the same lifestyle domains, but differed in structure, accountability and support provided.



Take Charge of Your Brain Health



There are several risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia. Some, such as age, we can't control. But there are **actions we can take to improve our brain health.**



Growing evidence shows that **healthy living can lower the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.**



Our brains need to be taken care of at all ages. It is never **too early or too late** to take action to protect brain health.



24/7 Helpline



The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering confidential information and support for people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public.



Free Education and Support

The Association offers robust information, education and support both in person and online, and helps to connect individuals with resources in the community.

TrialMatch®

The Association connects individuals living with cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, caregivers and healthy participants with current research studies. This free, easy-to-use service helps you find clinical research that may be a good fit.





My ALZ Journey

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

**Support, guidance
and connection for
newly diagnosed
people and care
partners –
all in one app**

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play



Free mobile app for newly diagnosed individuals and care partners



Provides personalized guidance, trusted resources and local connections



Helps users understand their diagnosis, stay independent and plan for the future



Connects users to their local Alzheimer's Association chapter for programs and support



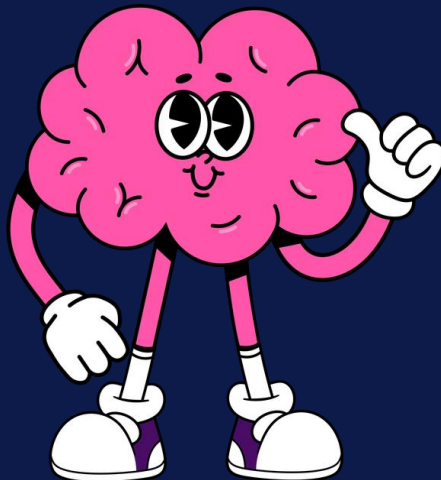
Built with input from people living with dementia and care partners



Join us to take action for brain health

- ✓ Spread the word! Tell others about these brain-healthy habits.
- ✓ Get involved in clinical trials or a research study. Some studies focus on prevention.
- ✓ Fight Alzheimer's through a fundraising activity of your choice on a day that works for you.
- ✓ Visit alz.org or call our helpline to learn more.

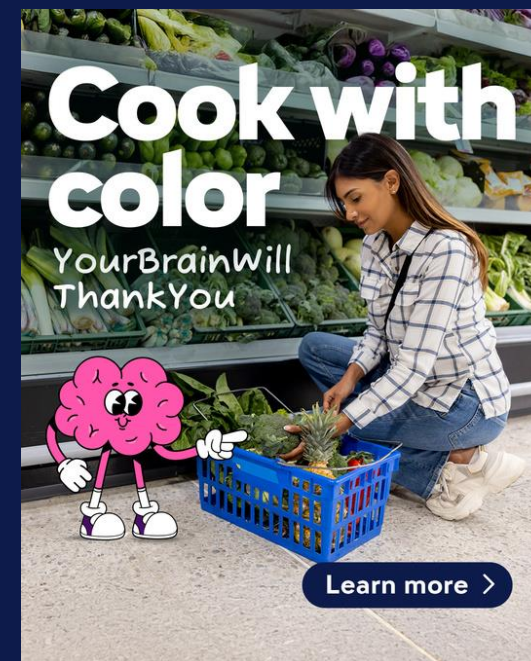
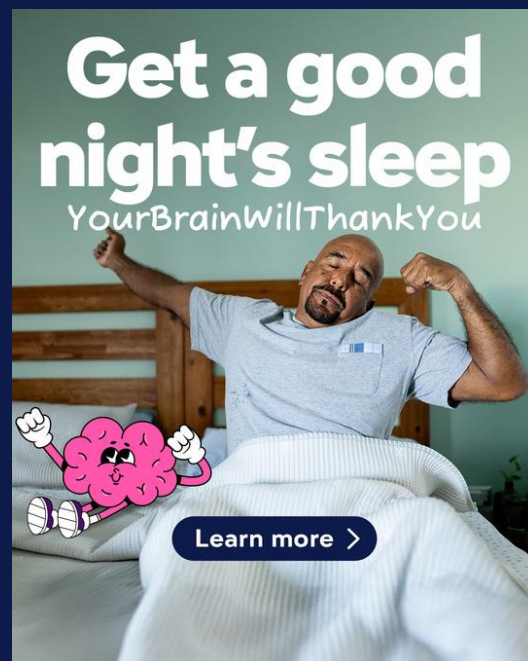
Your brain's health is in your hands



YourBrainWillThankYou

Regardless of your age, it's important to protect your brain's health and support your overall wellbeing. Luckily, there are actions you can take every day that have been found to reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and possibly even Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Find out what you can do today — your brain will thank you.



YourBrainWillThankYou.com



Phyllis Jones

Community Educator, Alzheimer's Association &
U.S. POINTER Participant

U.S. POINTER Study Experience and Impact



Concetta Forchetti, MD, PhD

Neurologist and Medical Director of the Center for
Clinical Research and Memory Disorders,
Ascension

**AD: Advances in Diagnosis.
Biomarkers in clinical practice and
research.**



AD: Advances in Diagnosis. Biomarkers in clinical practice and research

CONCETTA FORCHETTI MD,PHD.

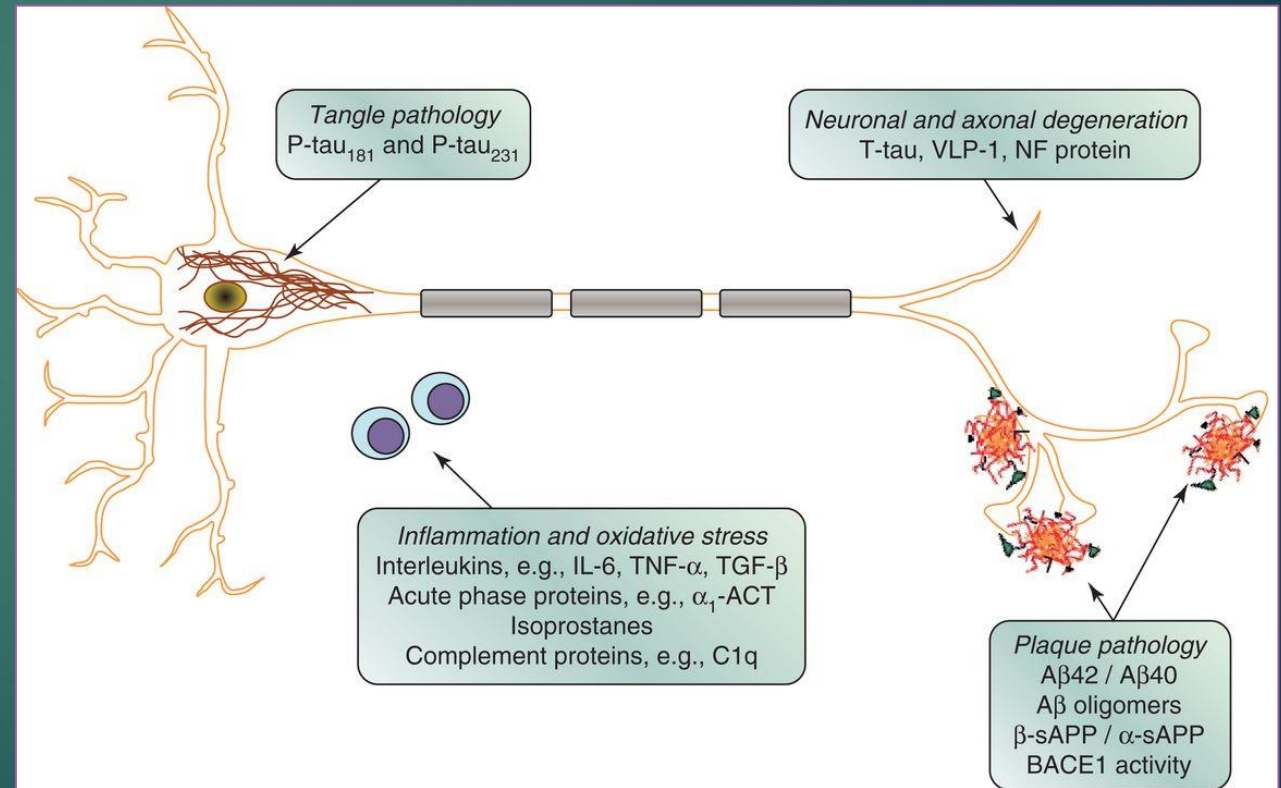
COGNITIVE DISORDER CLINIC

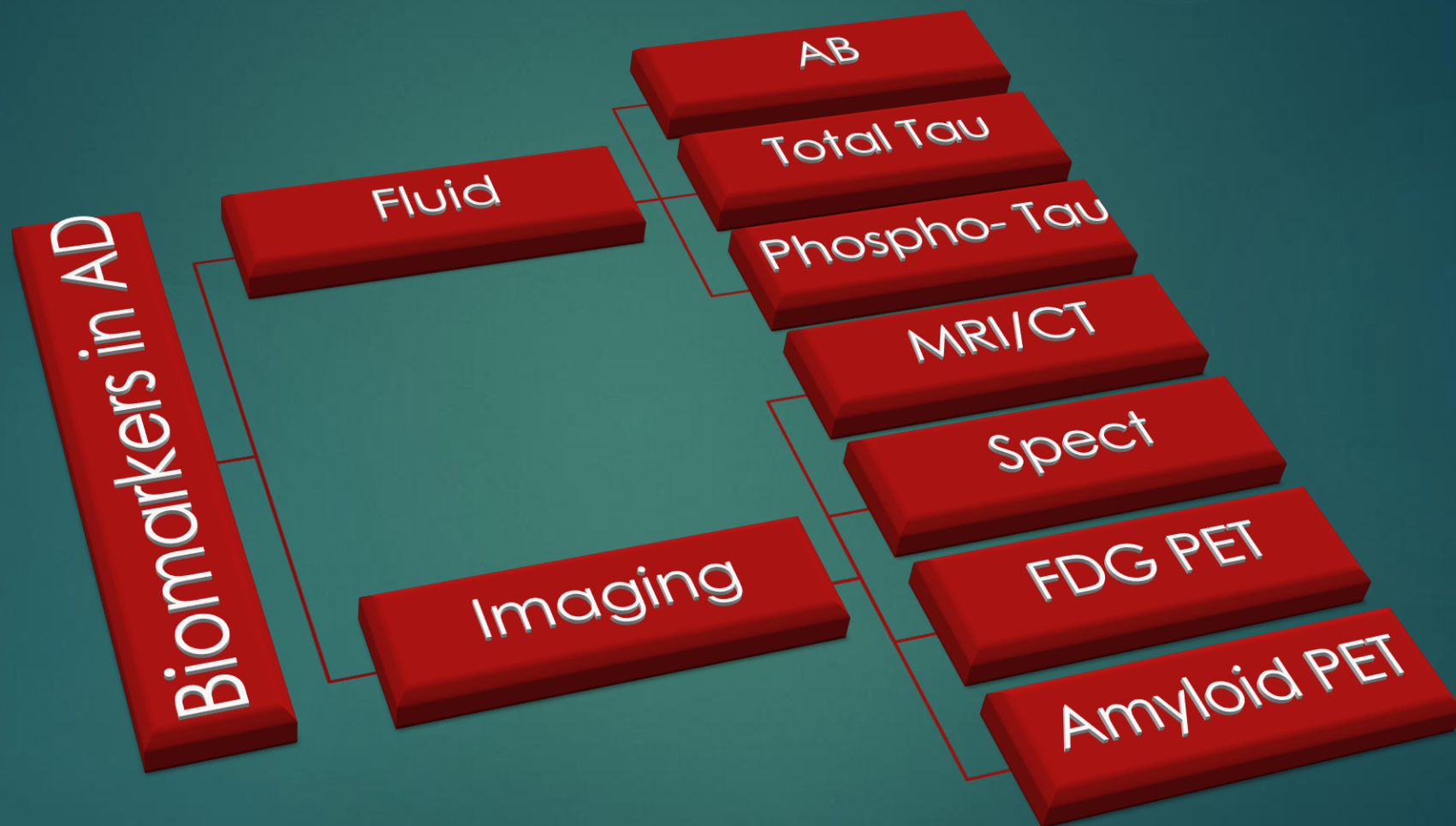
NINCDS/ADRDA Criteria for Probable Alzheimer's Disease

- ▶ Dementia established by clinical and neuropsychological examination
- ▶ Deficits in at least two areas of cognition
- ▶ Progressive worsening of memory and other cognitive functions
- ▶ No disturbance of consciousness
- ▶ Absence of other disorders to account for dementia

Biomarkers in AD

- ▶ Markers of amyloid- β ($A\beta$) accumulation
 - $A\beta$ levels in CSF
 - $A\beta$ labeling in brain
- ▶ Markers of neuronal injury or neurodegeneration
 - Tau in CSF
 - Phosphorylated tau in CSF

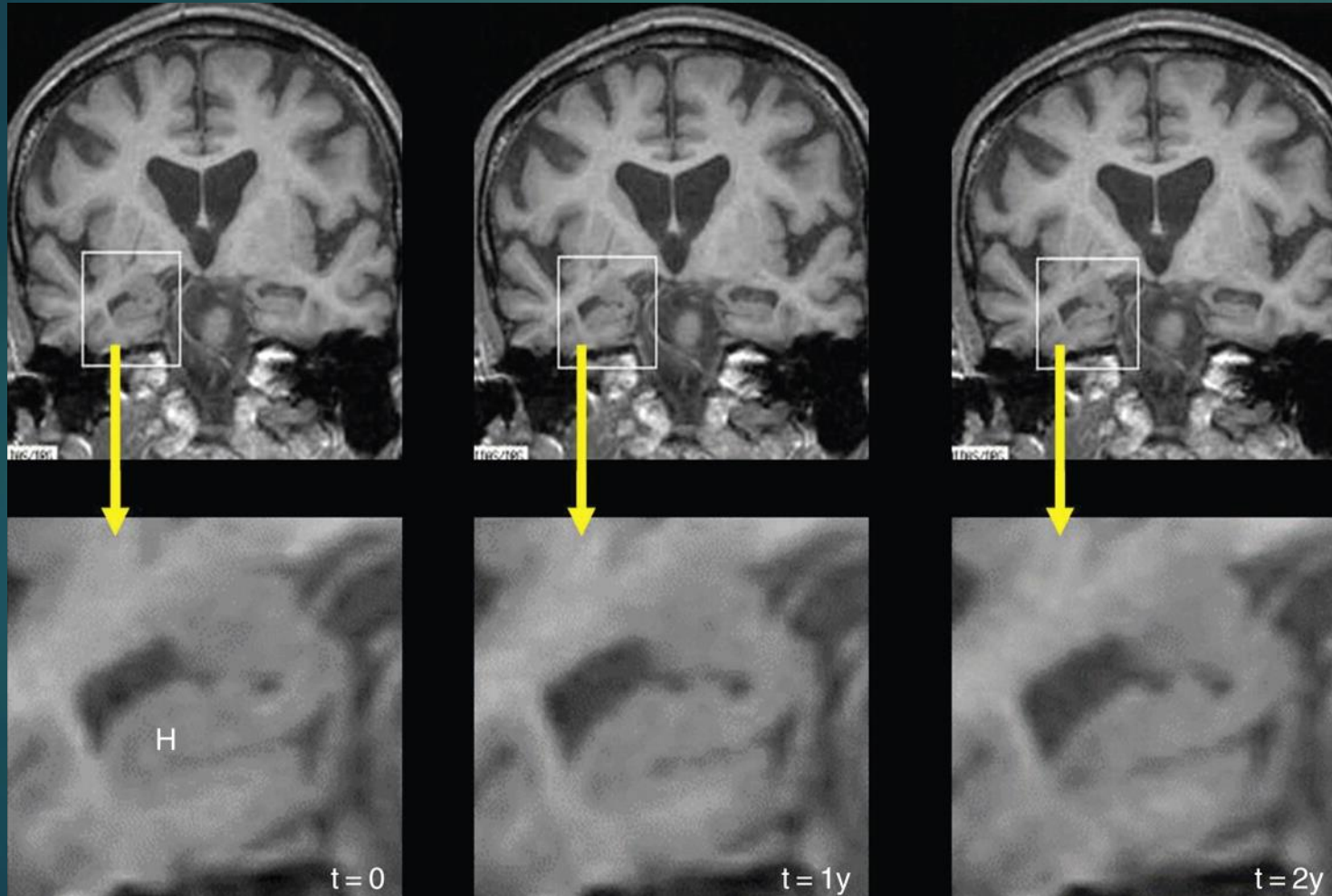




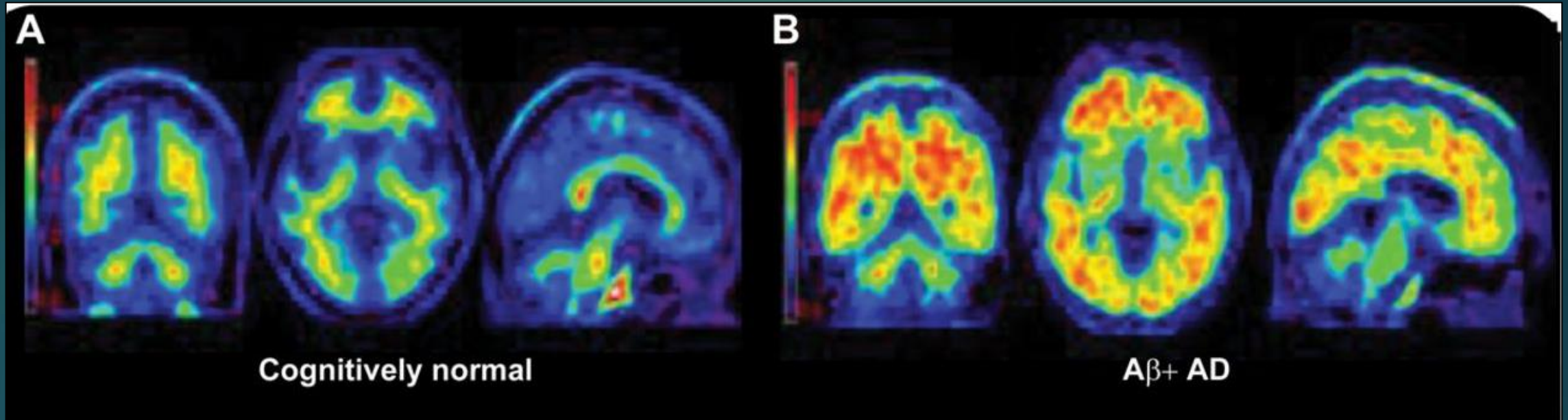
CT & MRI

- ▶ Helps to rule out other causes of dementia
- ▶ **Atrophy**
 - ▶ Medial temporal lobe structures
 - ▶ Hippocampus and entorhinal cortex
 - ▶ Heteromodal cortex
 - ▶ Posterior cingulate, precuneus, lateral parietal, temporal, and frontal regions
- ▶ **Atrophy begins years before** the diagnosis of dementia even in very mildly impaired individuals
- ▶ **Atrophy is not specific to AD**
 - ▶ Hippocampal volume loss is seen in normal aging as well as in hippocampal sclerosis and other neurodegenerative diseases that can mimic AD

MRI Features in AD



Amyloid Pet Scan



18 month follow-up study

Fluid Biomarkers in AD

- ▶ **Markers of amyloid- β ($A\beta$) accumulation**

- ▶ CSF assays of $A\beta_{42}$
- ▶ Decreased levels of CSF $A\beta_{42}$ in AD as compared to the controls
- ▶ CSF $A\beta_{42}$ is a measure of fibrillary $A\beta_{42}$ and plaque load in the brain

- ▶ **Markers of neuronal injury or neurodegeneration**

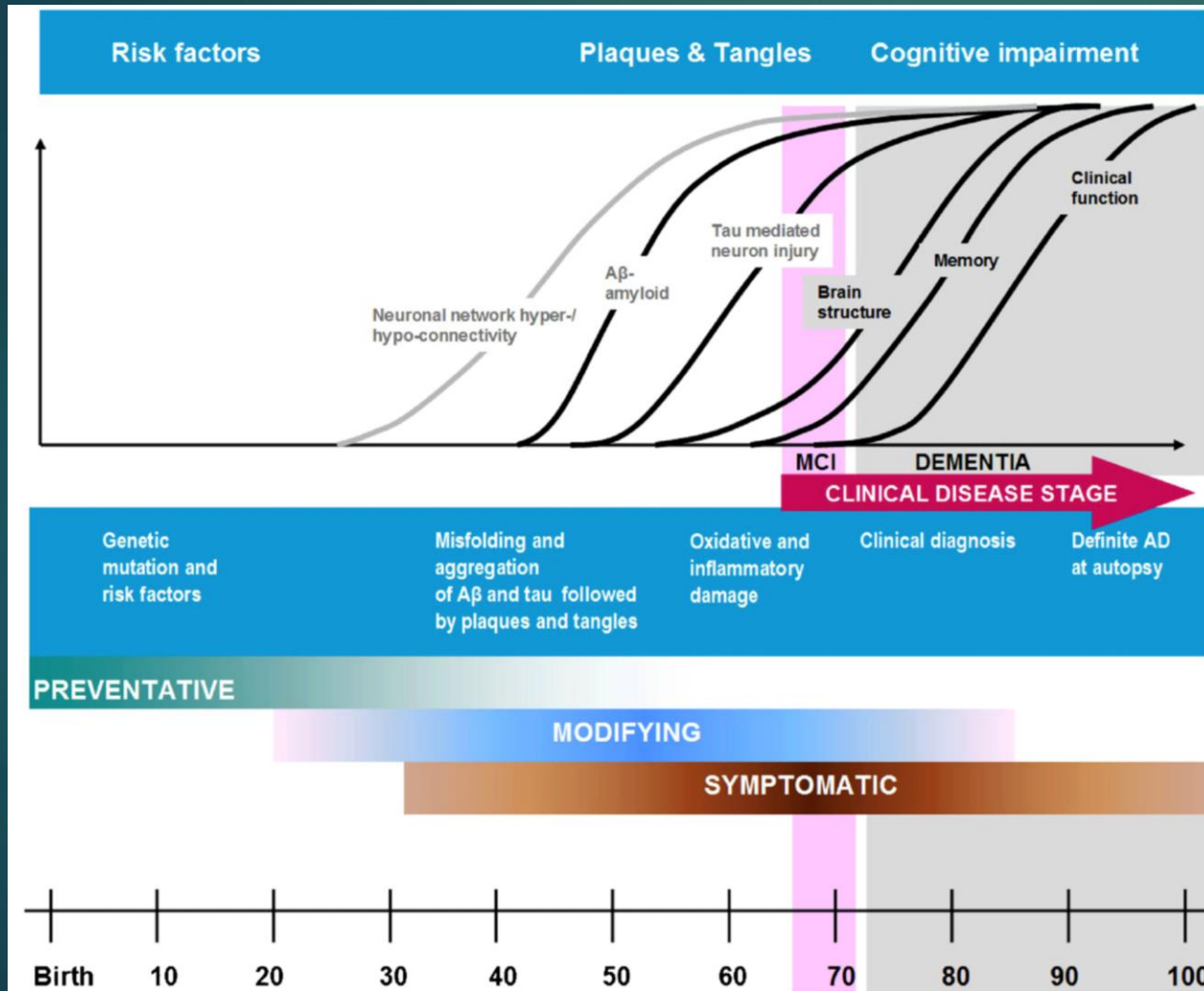
- ▶ **Tau Protein**

- ▶ Marked increase of CSF T-tau in AD to around 300% of control levels

- ▶ **Phosphorylated Tau Protein**

- ▶ Marked increase in CSF and Blood P-tau in AD.
- ▶ Precivity AD, AD Detect and Elecsys

Implications for Therapy



Amyloid/Tau Related Treatments

- ▶ . Lecanemab: Lequeubi
 - ▶ Biweekly infusions. After 18 months Monthly, waiting for approval for SC.
- ▶ . Donanemab: Kisunla
 - ▶ Monthly infusions for 12 or 18 months
- ▶ Both require frequent MRIs for first 7 months to monitor for possible ARIA
- ▶ CEI and Memantine



Kim Jay

Training Manager, Consultant & Senior
Community Health Worker (CHW),
Sinai Urban Health Institute

Repairing the Relationship: Historical Mistrust, Community Health Workers, and Health Outcomes



Break



Concetta Forchetti, MD, PhD

Neurologist and Medical Director of the Center for Clinical Research and Memory Disorders, Ascension

When & How to Make High Quality Referrals

Local Resources Available



Jennifer Swoyer, DO

Chief Medical Officer & Population Health Officer,
Pillars Community Health

Overview of Pillars Community Health



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.

Our Mission & Vision



MISSION

Improve the health of our communities and empower individuals through compassion, whole-person care.



VISION

Communities where all people have access to care they need, when they need it.



Locations

Pillars Community Health has 7 locations throughout the western suburbs, including:

- Berwyn
- Brookfield
- Countryside
- Hickory Hills
- La Grange
- La Grange Park
- Summit

We also have clinicians embedded in various community settings, including homes, police stations, schools, and hospitals.

Overview of Services

**Community
Health Center
Services**

**Domestic & Sexual
Violence Services**

**Behavioral
Health &
Support Services**

**Prevention, Health
Education & Outreach**



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.



Integrated Community Health Center

Patients who visit our Community Health Centers will find whole-person care- patients can access medical services, dental services, and behavioral health services for their physical, oral, mental, and emotional health.

Address:

321 N La Grange Rd
La Grange Park, IL 60526

Hours:

Sunday: Closed

Monday: 8:00 am - 8:30 pm

Tuesday: 8:00 am - 8:30 pm

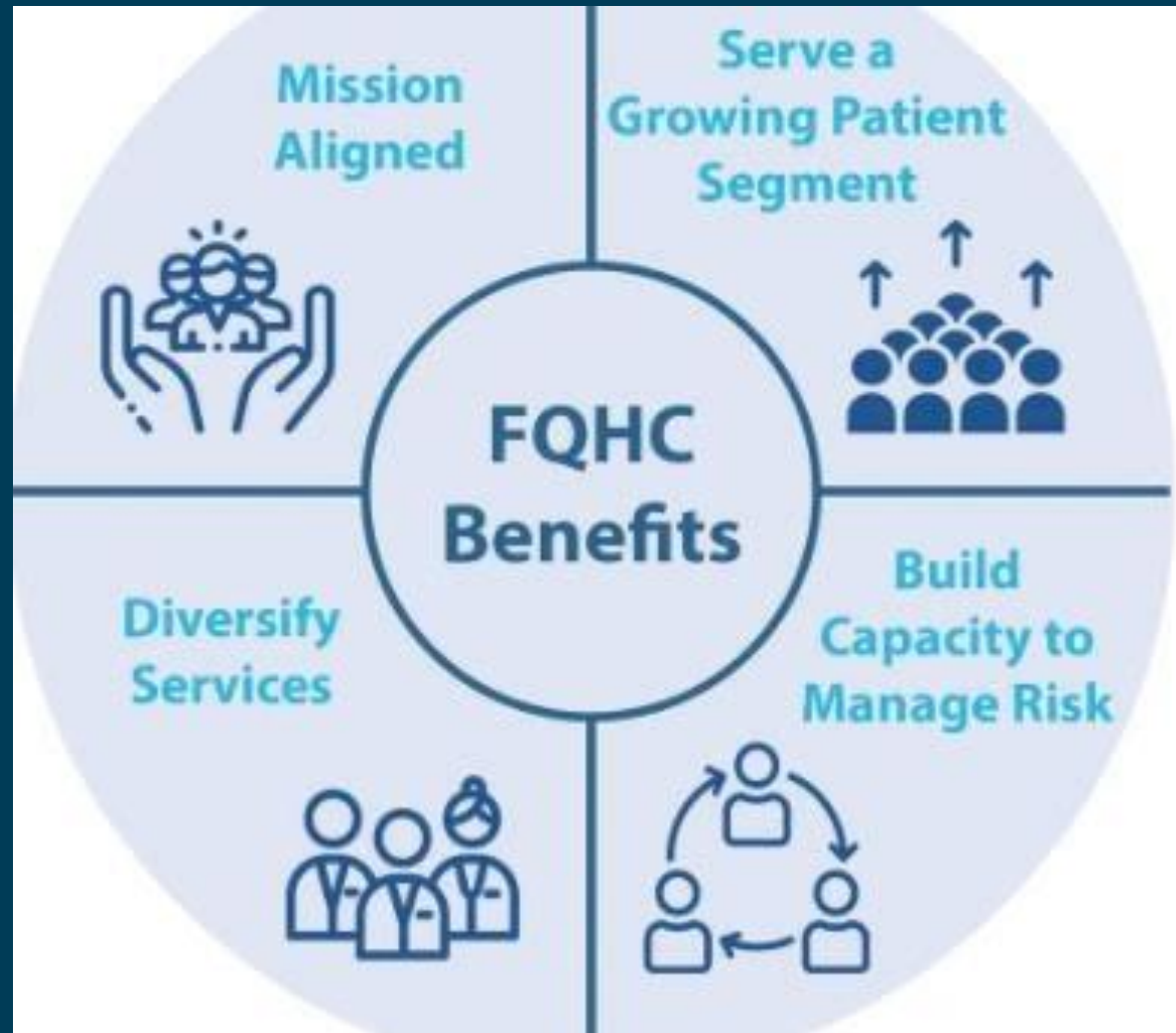
Wednesday: 8:00 am - 8:30 pm

Thursday: 8:00 am - 8:30 pm

Friday: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)



What is it?

What does it mean to the community?

Federally Qualified Health Centers are community-based health care providers that receive funds from the HRSA Health

Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas. They

must meet a stringent set of requirements, including providing care on

a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay and operating under a governing board

that includes patients.



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.



Behavioral Health & Support Services

- Mental Health Therapy
- The Loft at Eight Corners* (Teen Mental Health)
- Buddy's Place Childhood Bereavement
- Substance Use Treatment
- Mobile Crisis Response
- Community Support Team (CST)
- Employment Services
- Family Support Services
- Psychiatry for Health Center Patients
- Community Healthcare Network: Coordinated Medical & Behavioral Care

*The Loft is created in partnership with NAMI Metro Suburban



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.

Domestic & Sexual Violence Services

Pillars Community Health offers 24-hour domestic and sexual violence hotlines; crisis support; accompaniment of survivors to hospitals, police departments, and courthouses; and a residential domestic violence shelter.

24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline:
708-995-3680

24-hour Sexual Assault Hotline:
708-482-9600



Refer Someone (or Yourself!)

**Call 708-PILLARS (708-745-5277) to get connected.
You don't need to know which service you need—our
team will help guide you to the right support.**

**Individuals can reach out directly, and we also receive
referrals from hospitals, police departments, schools,
and other community partners.**



Pillars Community Health

Healing. Caring. Educating.

Learn More

www.PillarsCommunityHealth.org

708-PILLARS (708-745-5277)

24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline: 708-485-5254

24-hour Sexual Assault Hotline: 708-482-9600

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PillarsCommunityHealth

Instagram: [@PillarsCommunityHealth](https://www.instagram.com/PillarsCommunityHealth)

YouTube: youtube.com/PillarsCommunity1

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/Pillars-Community-Health



Pillars Community Health

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Kris Lonsway, PhD

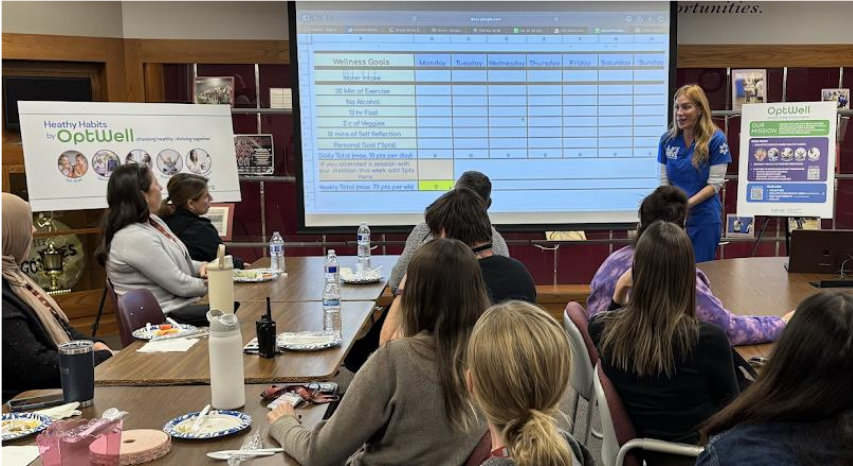
Founder & President, OptWell

OptWell Resources Available

Free In-Person Sessions Blending Movement with Mental Wellness



FREE 30-Day Employee Wellness Challenges



Brought to your workplace by

Benefits:

- Improved physical health
- Increased energy
- Stress reduction
- Better sleep
- More mindfulness
- Team connection

Who:

- School districts
- First responders
- Nonprofits & Corporations
- Any organization with 15+ employees

Goal setting & weekly nutrition counseling sessions covered by insurance for all participants for month-long challenge.

Learn more at
optwell.org/employee-wellness-challenges



Join Us April 16th

Learn more / RSVP:



<https://BrainHealthMatters.eventbrite.com>

OptWell
choosing healthy. thriving together.
OptWell.org

 **THE COMMUNITY HOUSE**
TheCommunityHouse.org

presents

Brain Health MATTERS:

What Parents, Teens, and Adults
Need to Know

FREE
EVENT



THURSDAY, APRIL 16



6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Resource Tables open 30 minutes before & after



THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

415 W. Eighth Street, Hinsdale, IL, 60521



What You'll Learn:



Importance of
Brain Health,
Lifestyle Habits &
Risk Reduction



Nutrition Tips
from Co-Creator
of The Official
MIND Diet



Early
Interventions &
Biomarkers for
Alzheimer's



Life-Changing
Findings from
the U.S.
POINTER Study

Details/RSVP
here:



<https://brainhealthmatters.eventbrite.com>

SPONSORS

Contact us about
sponsorship
opportunities

info@optwell.org

 **ALZHEIMER'S
ASSOCIATION**
Illinois Chapter

**YOUR LOGO
HERE**

Coming Soon

Fall 2026



October 2026

Women's Health:

Evidence-based Insights on Brain Health,
Heart Health, and Hormonal Health



Past Issues

January/February 2026 with Tips to **Manage Health**

English

Spanish

November/December 2025 with Tips on **Quality Sleep**

English

Spanish

September/October 2025 with Tips on **Mental Wellness**

English

Spanish

July/August 2025 with Tips on **Get Moving**

English

Spanish

**Subscribe
to our
newsletter**



OptWell Sleep Challenge

Sleep is instrumental for cognitive function, mental acuity and the ability to concentrate and learn new things.



CHANGES MADE:

LOG HOURS SLEPT PER NIGHT

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	S

NOTES:

Changes for Sleep Better

• Tech Tweaks

- Charge in another room
- Dim the phone light
- Set up "Do Not Disturb" features
- Turn off TV



• Bedtime Routines

- Stop eating/drinking 3 hrs before bedtime
- Meditate or journal
- Write to-do list for next day



• Bedroom Changes

- Make room dark, quiet, and cool
- Consider blackout curtains; no blue lights
- Avoid tech/work in bed



Follow Us:

for upcoming events and resources

@optwellorg



Panel Q&A



Olivia Matongo

*Alzheimer's
Association Illinois
Chapter*



Concetta Forchetti,
MD, PhD

Ascension



Kim Jay

*Sinai Urban Health
Institute*



Jennifer Swoyer,
OD

*Pillars Community
Health*



Kris Lonsway, PhD

OptWell, Moderator



Izzy Gandarilla

OptWell & Neuro-Yoga Institute

Mindful Movement for Brain Health: Live Demonstration

Table Discussions & Action Planning

At your tables, select a **notetaker** and **spokesperson** and discuss:

How can we better educate and empower the communities we serve to reduce brain health risks that are within their control?

Spokespersons: Be prepared to share one of your table's ideas with the large group.

Notetakers: Please provide your notes to an OptWell rep after "report outs."

We need your help

Please complete an anonymous
1-minutes survey.



OptWell
choosing healthy. thriving together.



Thank You

