



Mississippi BOLD Program's Public Health Actions to Advance Early Detection of Dementia

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



Please include a brief bio here.

Dr. Kina L. White is the Director for the Office of Community Health Improvement at the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH). The Office includes the Bureau of Healthy Aging, Bureau of Injury and Violence Prevention, and Bureau of Community and School Health. Dr. White serves as the Principal Investigator for multiple federal grant programs, including the CDC BOLD Grant (Core), and serves on the UsAgainstAlzheimer's Center for Brain Health Equity Advisory Board. Dr. White is also the State Lead for the Age-Friendly Public Health Systems initiative with Trust for America's Health.

Please start by telling everyone a little bit about the work that you're doing.

The Mississippi Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Program (MS ADRDP) is a statewide program that uses an evidence-based, data-driven approach to enhancing and implementing a statewide ADRD strategic plan, developing a public health education program, and enhancing partnerships among key stakeholders to reduce ADRD specific morbidity and mortality. The State of Mississippi Strategic Plan for Alzheimer's and Related Dementia, a five-year plan, identifies goals, objectives, strategies to reduce the burden of ADRD across the continuum of preventive care, from research, community awareness, coordinated care, dementia risk reduction and early detection, caregiver support and brain health.

Through effective partnerships, the MS ADRDP has established a collaborative to impact public health actions. By joining an existing Steering Committee (Coalition) for the Alzheimer's State Plan, the leveraging of resources has resulted in dynamic progress. Two years into the partnership, program highlights include enhancements of the Alzheimer's State Plan; trend analyses and dissemination of BRFSS data (Cognitive Decline and Caregiver Modules) to coalition partners for use in decision making and health promotion; support of a statewide brain health inequities symposium; increased access to chronic disease self-management programs for dementia caregivers; continuing medical education for risk reduction and early diagnosis; development of interactive caregiver resource map; quarterly MIND



MINUTE newsletters for health care professionals on various brain health educational topics; and Purple Sunday events with faith-based communities.

What's the story behind why you're doing what you're doing?

In 2015, the MSDH participated in a Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) project to establish baseline information that could direct strategic planning efforts towards increasing brain health awareness in the state. Through stakeholder analyses, research and evaluation, key problem statements identified that there was a lack of understanding of brain health in MS, insufficient promotion of brain health in MS, and brain health was not considered a public health issue in MS. These findings served as a catalyst for public health actions to improve education and awareness of brain health, and eventually application of the CDC BOLD Grant funding. While there was already leading dementia-related work across the state, the Mississippi BOLD program applies an equity lens to the Alzheimer's State Plan with targeted public health actions to address the social determinants of health related to ADRD, including the establishment of Health Equity Ambassadors for each of the five priority goal groups. By using a public health approach to addressing Alzheimer's, attention is given to health disparities, rural area inequities, high burden populations in the state, and caregiver needs.

Tell us about some parts of your projects that you're working on now that you are really excited about.

The Health Equity Ambassadors are volunteers that serve as a liaison between the Alzheimer's State Plan Goal Groups and the Mississippi BOLD Program. These individuals have a genuine commitment to learning more about health disparities and best practices to improve health equity for individuals living with ADRD, and their caregivers. A key benefit of serving in the role includes receiving education and training on cultural competency, health disparity and health equity issues and their impact on individuals, families and communities impacted by ADRD. The long-term goal is to empower collaborative action planning and ongoing monitoring of progress on health equity strategies within the Alzheimer's State Plan.

The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) project is a joint effort between the Mississippi BOLD program and The Memory Impairment and Neurodegenerative Dementia (MIND) Center at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Through an analytical review of existing research and data sources (e.g., National Establishment Time Series (NETS) Database, BRFSS, etc.), an assessment of the build environment and socio-economic status of sub-populations of individuals with ADRD in the state is being conducted. The summation findings of the analytical review are presented to State Plan Goal Leaders to incorporate strategies and priority activities of the Alzheimer's State Plan to address SDOH.



For people who want to know more about your current work and programs, what are 1-2 pieces of information that you think is important for them to know?

Effective collaboration and leveraging of partnerships and resources is essential to establishing and sustaining public health actions to address ADRD. The goal is to always be complimentary and never competitive.

Shifting from individual to systems-level approaches of addressing ADRD has increased the effectiveness of collaborative impact.

What would you tell someone who wanted to start a similar program like yours in their own setting (e.g., another state, county, or city)?

Begin program efforts with a baseline of understanding of the current state/county/city landscape of ADRD. Conduct an in-depth environmental scan or community needs assessment first to gain an increased understanding of current assets, resources (including stakeholders), and gaps of care for individuals with ADRD and their caregivers. While funding is important, effective collaboration and the leveraging of existing resources and partnerships couple provide significant capacity to starting a similar program.

Where else can people look to find out more about all the great work that you're doing?

Visit www.healthyms.com for more information!

What is one thing that you wish people knew more about early detection of dementia? (This can be anything from a fact or data point/statistic, to a major consideration that you wish people talked more about, or an anecdote/story that you think really captures the importance of screening and detecting dementia earlier.)

Cultural competency is an essential component of early detection of dementia. How we communicate/frame/approach early detection and screening efforts with all populations is very important. Establishing trust with individuals during this phase of care planning can strengthen the relationship and improve care plans.

Thank you so much for your time and all the great work that you do!