STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Tara Shephard

District 79

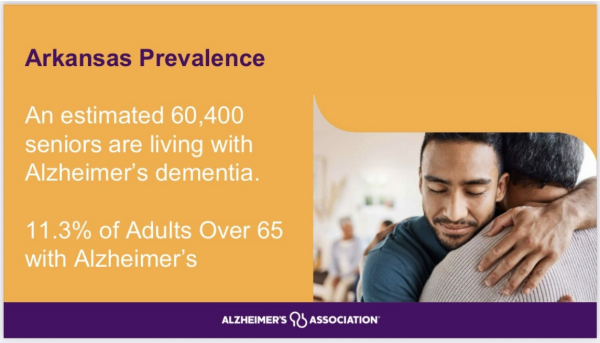
September 19, 2025

2025 Alzheimer's Report Released

On Monday, the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Advisory Council met to release its 2025 findings, fulfilling the requirements set forth by Act 391 of 2021. The report serves as both an update on where Arkansas stands in addressing dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and a call to action for where the state must go next.

The numbers are sobering. Today, more than 60,000 Arkansans over the age of 65 are living with Alzheimer's dementia, accounting for over 11 percent of the state's senior population. The impact is not confined to those diagnosed. More than 173,000 Arkansans provide unpaid care for loved ones, contributing an estimated 265 million hours of care each year. Economists value that work at more than $5.4 billion annually, a figure that underscores just how much families shoulder in the absence of formal systems of support.

Despite these challenges, the Council's report highlights important progress. Public health data collection is expanding, with new survey modules set to capture more accurate information about cognitive decline and caregiving in the coming years. Caregiver education and referral programs are growing, support groups are more widely available, and respite grant programs are helping to provide relief to families who give so much of their time and energy to loved ones. Training for health care providers, first responders, and memory-care professionals is improving as well, ensuring more Arkansans interact with people who understand the realities of this disease.

At the same time, the report makes clear that significant work remains. Rural communities continue to face barriers in accessing screenings and specialized treatment. Funding for programs is often limited or uncertain, creating challenges in building sustainable, long-term solutions. And stigma still surrounds dementia, discouraging families from seeking help or talking openly about symptoms until the disease has progressed.

Looking ahead, the Council stresses the importance of preparing for the future. Arkansas's aging population is growing, and the number of people affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias will only increase in the coming years. We have posted the entire report at arkansashouse.org.