



WAI Regional Milwaukee Office

At the heart of the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute's (WAI) Regional Milwaukee Office is community engagement centered on five integrated mission pillars: **community outreach, professional education, advocacy, service, and research**. This model empowers the Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin communities of color, primarily African Americans, by providing culturally-specific health care services for its aging populations affected by dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other health disparities. The WAI draws upon the expertise and resources of the University of Wisconsin, faith and community-based professional organizations, and health care systems to develop and implement solution-based programs and services. Our model serves as a catalyst for the creation and strengthening of dementia and Alzheimer's research, programs, and services, while reducing health disparities that disproportionately impact communities of color.

Community Outreach and Professional Education

Using our motto, "meet the people where they are," we foster partnerships to deliver culturally-appropriate education, training and outreach programs to providers, those living with dementia, and family caregivers. Annually the WAI Regional Milwaukee Office reaches over 30,000 individuals and households through our programs and activities. Our efforts focus on dementia-related early detection/risk reduction, treatment, psychosocial management, and caregiver interventions. Professional training offers state-of-the-art education around best practices to provide culturally-sensitive care to patients and effectively address community and family needs.



Ahman Green. 2015 Breaking the Silence Keynote.

Community Outreach & Professional Education

- Increase public awareness and understanding of health disparities and dementia within communities of color and with those engaged in health care service delivery
- Provide Alzheimer's-related public health education on early detection and treatment, late-stage treatment and management issues, home safety, risk assessment, caregiver interventions, and multicultural outreach
- Clarify misperceptions that may exist about Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias
- Educate health care professionals on best practices to provide culturally-sensitive care to patients and effectively address community and family needs

Excerpt of Activities

- Annual Breaking the Silence Breakfast Dialogue: Addressing Dementia in Communities of Color
- Breaking the Silence "Block by Block" dementia-specific community workshops
- Inclusion-training professional education workshops, and on campus lectures
- Urban Church Wellness Initiative: Roadmaps to Health Faith-based Intervention
- Taking off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) Community Chapter creation
- Dementia Lunch and Learn clergy partnership with the State Baptist Convention

Advocacy

At the inception of the WAI Regional Milwaukee Office in 2008, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) was formed to be a voice to, and from, the community. This Board serves as counsel to the University of Wisconsin (UW) and WAI Regional Milwaukee Office team on outreach, research retention/recruitment strategies, and advises on barriers to research participation.

Advocacy

- Provide a voice for the community
- Counsel the UW and WAI team on outreach and research recruitment strategies that are culturally sensitive
- Identify and address barriers to research participation by under-represented populations
- Support the recruitment and retention of research subjects
- Become a conduit for supporting Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in the community

Excerpt of Activities

- Provides meaningful insight and support to UW investigators on research projects; resulting in funding for those projects provided by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Recognized by the UW and Aurora researchers for its expertise and recommendations on innovative research proposals for the African American community
- Guidance was instrumental in the UW hiring an African American scientist in Alzheimer's disease

Service (Access to Comprehensive Care)

By reducing barriers that impede access to information and services, the WAI Regional Milwaukee Office has connected families to health care services through over 500 in-home care visits and 500 memory and health screenings—resulting in at least 175 individuals obtaining an accurate memory diagnosis. Over 200 families have been connected to social services, ultimately allowing people living with dementia to remain at home—safer, longer. Our newly-developed lifestyle intervention program focuses on community members at risk for dementia. Our signature program, the *Amazing Grace Chorus®*, improves the quality of life of its participants and caregivers through socialization and music while integrating the pillars of education and service.



Amazing Grace Chorus®

Service

- Provide culturally-sensitive care, improve quality of life for persons with dementia, support family caregivers
- Connect African American families and others to services that address their health and social needs
- Reduce barriers/access to information, services and care; help patients and families navigate their dementia journey
- Deliver culturally-appropriate Alzheimer's-related and related disorders resources and services
- Foster partnerships with faith-based groups, medical and social service providers, and community organizations to enhance effective service delivery for those living with dementia and family caregivers

Excerpt of Activities

- In-Home Memory Assessment
- Community-Based Dementia Screening and Cognitive Testing
- Personalized Care and Treatment Planning
- Dementia Care Service and Resource Connectors
- *Amazing Grace Chorus®*
- Milwaukee Health Services Diagnostic Memory Clinic
- Community-Based Dementia Care and Programming

Research

Today, there is no known cure and there are no survivors of Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia. It is the 6th leading cause of death in adults and affects all demographic groups regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status. But despite the extent of illness in all community sectors, communities of color are at 1.4 to 2 times greater risk of developing the disease and are generally under-represented in research and in the groups involved in receiving services for dementia.

Recognizing the emerging public health crisis this poses for the African American community, the WAI Regional Milwaukee Office is advancing dementia and health disparities research by actively engaging under-represented populations in cutting-edge scientific studies. By implementing a public health community investment approach to research that focuses on transparency, community engagement, and reducing the stigma and fear often associated with Alzheimer's disease and research, we have grown the number of African Americans participating in research from 2% to 10%. Today over 1,500 participants are enrolled in the WAI's Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer's Prevention (WRAP), the world's largest study of its kind. Retention of research participants in WRAP is vital to unlocking the answers of why communities of color are at a higher risk of developing the disease, thus this remains a high priority for our program.

Research (WRAP)

- Focus on early detection of Alzheimer's, and elucidating factors that make a person more resilient or more at risk
- Understanding why African Americans and Latinos are at increased risk for Alzheimer's
- Advance health disparities and memory disorders research impacting African Americans and communities of color by actively facilitating and engaging under-represented populations in scientific studies
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of health disparities and Alzheimer's research
- Present the latest news and resources on research strategies, results and dissemination

Excerpt of Activities

- Cognitive testing every 2 years
- Early detection focus and elucidating factors that make a person more resilient to Alzheimer's or more at risk
- Outreach and recruitment
- WRAP Updates and Newsletters to research participants
- Biennial information sessions on research findings and new studies for participants and guests throughout Wisconsin