

# NEWSLTR

A PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

## AGE-FRIENDLY LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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# Livable Community Spotlight: CUTLER BAY: A Community for All Ages

*Desiree Ducasa, Communications  
Manager for the Town of Cutler Bay*

There are many characteristics that draw residents to the Town of Cutler Bay—its small-town charm, easy access to the coast and Florida Keys, the close bond between residents, and its age-friendly features. While some of these occurred naturally, when it comes to being age-friendly—this is a direct result of strategic design and planning that the Town Council, staff, and residents championed.

## The Journey to Becoming Age-Friendly

Cutler Bay's journey to become a more age-friendly community can be traced to 2010, when the Town Council adopted a resolution to join the Florida Department of Elder Affairs' Communities for a Lifetime (CFAL) initiative.

Continued on page 2

Aerial view of Cutler Bay



**DEMENTIA**  
CARE & CURE INITIATIVE  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS



PHONE: (850) 414-2000  
TDD: (850) 414-2001  
EMAIL: [LivableFL@elderaffairs.org](mailto:LivableFL@elderaffairs.org)

## Cutler Bay...continued from page 1

"Back in 2010, when I was a Council Member, I was looking at our community, and I recognized that our population was growing older," expressed Cutler Bay's Mayor Tim Meerbott. "As we moved forward, I realized that we had to make sure to keep in mind the needs of our residents in all stages of life. I proposed that our town join the Department of Elder Affairs' CFAL initiative to help guide our efforts."

Two years later, in 2012, the town established a CFAL Committee—led by former Vice Mayor Sue Ellen Loyzelle—to develop a Senior Needs Assessment that would determine the needs of seniors in the community and help establish programs, services, and priorities to fulfill those needs.

Through community feedback and the findings of the assessment, the CFAL Committee developed the town's Age-Friendly Action Plan—which serves as a blueprint for the initiatives and projects the town takes on. In 2018, Cutler Bay became the second municipality in all of Florida to have its Action Plan approved by AARP and the World Health Organization.



**ABOVE: 2018 Cutler Bay Senior Games**

The Action Plan went on to receive recognition from Congress, the Florida Senate, and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.

In June 2021, the committee was renamed the Age-Friendly Community Committee.

### Improvements in the Eight Domains of Livability

Through the town's Age-Friendly Action Plan, many projects have been implemented that have improved and enhanced the community's eight

domains of livability. Here are just some of the many projects completed that enrich and boost the lives of Cutler Bay's residents of all ages.

### Outdoor Space & Buildings

Some of the current improvements to the town's outdoor space and buildings include the addition of a new canoe/kayak launch and passive park, fitted with ADA features; the complete renovation of Franjo Park, also fitted with ADA features and a new community room; and the addition of outdoor fitness equipment at several town parks. The town has also heavily invested in creating complete streets and increasing pedestrian facilities, which enhance safety and promote a healthy lifestyle.

### Transportation

In 2012, the town added a local bus circulator that seniors ride for free with a Golden Passport. The service hours increased over time, and now the bus runs seven days a week. In 2020, the town launched a free, on-demand, shared public transportation service that takes residents and visitors anywhere within the town during weekdays, at no cost to them. Both services have been met with great success, and the town

## BELOW: Active Adults Luncheon in 2019





is considering options to continue expanding these services.

### Housing

Most older adults want to age in place. If a community provides affordable housing options for varying life stages, this desire is achievable. In 2019, the Town Council approved a cost-saving incentive for developers to bring affordable housing to the senior community by reducing the number of parking spots required on residential buildings from two spots to one. Soon after this was implemented, a 93-unit senior housing project was approved for development, which will provide more senior housing options in the town's inventory.

### Social Participation

To increase senior resident engagement and participation, the town developed its Active Adults program. This program provides more than 30 free social and educational events to the 55+ population throughout the year. Some of the activities include painting classes, cooking classes, luncheons, educational presentations, field trips to the zoo and baseball games, and much more! Even through the pandemic, many of these activities continued on a virtual platform.

### Respect & Social Inclusion

Cutler Bay greatly values the input of its senior residents and recognizes their contributions to the community. The town regularly and strategically links with local senior centers to bring town meetings to their locations. The town's Active Adults program also provides the opportunity to senior residents from all walks of life to engage with one another.

### Civic Participation & Employment

To empower senior residents with the skills that many volunteer and job opportunities require, the town developed a series of educational classes. The classes include basic computer training, English for



**ABOVE: Town resident at Active Adults event in 2019**

Spanish speakers, Spanish for English speakers, and the town installed a computer lab at one of the senior housing centers to put the residents' skills to use and provide a platform to seek job opportunities.

### Communication & Information

Recognizing the importance of communication, the town developed a new staff position dedicated to managing the Active Adults program and to act as a liaison to the senior community. When the pandemic broke out, this staff member called every senior living in Cutler Bay to ensure their needs were met. Communication with senior centers in town is held on a weekly basis to ensure their needs are met and feedback collected. The town also regularly publishes e-newsletters and Active Adults emails, has a dedicated webpage for Active Adults activities, and regularly publishes information on its social media pages and local newspapers.

### Community & Health Services

Through partnerships with local health organizations, the town organizes an annual health fair that is attended by hundreds of residents. While this event was paused during the pandemic, the town partnered with local nursing colleges to provide

free health screenings directly in the lobby of each senior center. The town is also the only community that hosts the sanctioned annual Senior Games, which are qualifiers to the State Senior Games and National Senior Games. Prior to the pandemic, fitness classes and swimming classes were also offered weekly at no cost to members of the SilverSneakers program—a health and fitness program designed for adults 65+ that's included with many Medicare plans.

### It's a Community Effort!

The town's success in implementing these projects can be attributed to several factors which include town staff's continuous efforts to identify and apply for grant opportunities that fund many of the programs, the advocacy and leadership by past and present Town Councils, the engagement and support of its residents, and the work of many partners. It's community effort that makes Cutler Bay a place all ages can enjoy!

Learn more about the Town of Cutler Bay's Age-Friendly efforts at [cutlerbay-fl.gov](http://cutlerbay-fl.gov).

# AGING IN COMMUNITY

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

*Deborah Gauvreau, consultant with The Patterson Foundation, Suncoast Villages initiative*

*Diane Gutman, director of operations at Wellington Cares, Inc.*

*Barbara Shearer, volunteer, Neighbors Network in Lee County*

Florida, the dream destination of many older adults, is widely known as paradise. The [Village to Village Network](#) (VtVN) model provides an engaging, energizing, and affordable way for older adults to realize their dream of living in their community and aging in their home. Nationwide, over 250 villages are part of the network. Not to be confused with The Villages in central Florida, the smaller villages of the VtVN model are developed around helping people age within neighborhoods where they already live.

According to AARP's 2018 Home and Community Preferences Survey, 77 percent of respondents would like to live in their community as long as possible. Per the US Census Bureau, Florida is ranked second in the US for the highest population of older adults

and estimates 32.5 percent of Florida's population will be over 60 by 2030.

Villages are formed through a cadre of caring neighbors and organizations who want to change the paradigm of aging. Local villages connect members to a full range of practical support services to help with non-medical tasks, services, programs, and transportation, while coordinating recreational, social, educational, and cultural programs. This model is structured to minimize isolation and promote interaction among peers.

Villages in Florida have formed the Florida Villages Network to share best practices, learn from each other, and provide support to one another and developing villages. Villages in



Florida include the following: [LIV-UP](#) in Clearwater, [Neighbor to Neighbor in the Nenes](#) in Tallahassee, [Neighbors Network](#) in Maitland, and [Wellington Cares](#) in Wellington. Villages under development in Florida are as follows: Neighbors Network in Lee County in Fort Myers; Pueblos en la Comunidad, Inc., in Winter Springs, which will be bilingual and is focused on the Spanish speaking community; and [Suncoast Villages](#) in the Suncoast region of Florida.

If you are interested in learning more, developing a village in your area, or would like to join the Florida Villages Network, which you can do even as an individual, contact us by clicking on any of the Village links above.



# FLORIDA

## ALZHEIMER'S STATISTICS



### PREVALENCE

**65+** NUMBER OF PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OLDER WITH ALZHEIMER'S

Year	TOTAL	ESTIMATED % CHANGE
2020	580,000	<b>24.1%</b>
2025	720,000	



### MORTALITY



DEMENTIA DEATHS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**3,121** more deaths than expected from dementia in 2020 **18.5%** higher than average

**#** OF DEATHS FROM ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE (2019)

**6,539**

**6<sup>th</sup>** leading cause of death



HOSPICE (2017)

**19,897**

# of people in hospice with a primary diagnosis of dementia

**15%**

% in hospice with a primary diagnosis of dementia



HOSPITALS (2018)

**1,552**

# of emergency department visits per 1,000 people with dementia

**23.0%**

dementia patient hospital readmission rate



MEDICAID

**\$ 2.689** BILLION

Medicaid costs of caring for people with Alzheimer's (2020)

**28.4%**

projected change in costs from 2020 to 2025



MEDICARE

**\$30,106**

per capita Medicare spending on people with dementia (in 2020 dollars)



CAREGIVING (2020)

**527,000**

Number of Caregivers

**685,000,000**

Total Hours of Unpaid Care

**\$10,636,000,000**

Total Value of Unpaid Care

**47.8%**

% of caregivers with chronic health conditions

**16.3%**

% of caregivers with depression

More than **6 million Americans** are living with Alzheimer's. The cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias is estimated to total **\$355 billion** in 2021, increasing to more than **\$1.1 trillion** (in today's dollars) by mid-century. Dementia caregivers today are providing **20% more care** than in 2009.





## Empowering Civic Engagement

*Michael Roman, Community Partnerships Manager, City of Miami*

The City of Miami is shifting mindsets when looking at how to engage communities. Today, it is extremely important to look at ways that leaders can reimagine community engagement as a thoughtful tool for collaboration. Empower60 was a four-week academy in the City of Miami designed for older adults, residents age 60 and older, to learn the best practices of engaging and working with local government. The program provided a weekly course for two hours and was facilitated to help participants increase resident engagement, educate neighbors about local government's role and impact, and promote engagement and service deliveries of governmental services. Topics included public safety, clean and beautiful neighborhoods, growth and development, education and economic access, culture and recreation, and efficient and effective government. The pilot program was funded by the Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative, a collaborative, collective impact effort to make Miami-Dade a place for older adults of all ages to stay active and healthy with dignity and enjoyment. The initiative aims to work with community residents, leaders, stakeholders, organizations, and municipalities toward a more Age-Friendly community.

The goal of Empower60 was to work closely with residents and involve them in ways to make a difference within their communities. Participation in civic engagement activities can help older adults become better informed about current events, as well as assist the government by acting as community connectors with eyes in the community. Civic Engagement for older adults is critical, and the City of



### **Empower60 participants holding certificates for completion of their personal civic engagement plans within the City of Miami.**

Miami wanted to prioritize the voice of the growing senior population. Each participant completed the curriculum with a personal civic engagement plan and a better relationship with the City of Miami government. As a result, there has been a significant change in knowledge of the participants in relation to the City of Miami government. The civic engagement plan includes the participant's vision for his/her/their community, topics and issues of concern, contact information to key City staff, options and recommendations for the neighborhood, and implementation and next steps. Participants identified the following issues: Voter Suppression, High Cost of Florida Power and Light, Gun Violence, Community Involvement, Illegal Dumping and Trash, Police Visibility and Community Policing, Creation of a Senior Advisory Board, Housing Issues, Homelessness, and more.

COVID-19 played a huge role in the program's impact. The pandemic has been exacerbating pre-existing socioeconomic issues, and the City is faced with re-prioritizing resources to meet public health and economic needs in an uncertain climate. The participants now have direct contacts in the City of Miami and are now active community connectors (connecting the City of Miami and other community members). The select group has

addressed and discussed community problems, researched solutions, and is already implementing its plans. Historically, older adults have been encouraged to become civically engaged by volunteering in their communities. Those benefits have been monumental for older adults, but the City of Miami is tasked with going beyond volunteering. Older adults have the wisdom, experience, and time to be agents of change in our communities. The long-term impacts vary among the individuals' civic engagement plans. Participants are addressing issues around speeding, police visibility and community policing, illegal dumping and trash, homeless concerns, voter suppression, older adult issues/resilience, and more.

The cohort is equipped with the resources and tools needed to attend commission meetings, connect with elected officials, communicate with City of Miami departments, and bring change in the communities. In the future, more residents will take an active role in cultivating positive change. The City of Miami hopes to see an increase of older adults working in partnership with the City of Miami for more active and inclusive neighborhoods. This project has served as a successful pilot to bring resident voices into programmatic planning processes.



*Margie Bell*  
Livable Communities Coordinator  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

AARP Florida and the Department of Elder Affairs have joined forces to host their sixth annual Age-Friendly Sharing Symposium: A Map to Livable Florida. In a four-day total series of virtual events, three have already occurred. These sessions have included engaging panel discussions consisting of local Age-Friendly leaders, as well as interactive polling questions for audience participation. If we missed you during sessions one through three held in September, a recap is provided below. Make sure to register for our fourth and final session on Thursday, October 7, 2021, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.!

## SESSION ONE

### *Florida's Journey to Become Age-Friendly*

Our first session of the series discussed what it means to be Age-Friendly and why Florida's community leaders are making the commitment. It held interactive panel discussions and sessions with state and local elected leaders, and Age-Friendly experts. Featured speakers included:

- **RICHARD PRUDOM**  
Secretary,  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- **JEFF JOHNSON**  
State Director, AARP Florida
- **KATHY BLACK, PH.D.**  
AARP, Age-Friendly Consultant

## SESSION TWO

### *Creating Age-Friendly Community Health and Wellbeing*

Our second session discussed Florida's Age-Friendly Public Health system, statewide Dementia-caring Community Task forces, as well as several state-local initiatives designed to promote healthy aging and support for persons with dementia and their caregivers. Session Two's featured speakers:

- **RYAN MIMS**  
Chief Health Strategist,  
Florida Department of Health in  
Walton County
- **MEGAN WOLFE**  
National Leader on Age-Friendly  
Public Health Systems
- **KRISTEN GRIFFIS**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Elder Options
- **JENNIFER MARTINEZ**  
Executive Director,  
Marion Senior Services

## SESSION THREE

### *Collaborating for Age-Friendly Community Resiliency*

Session three identified how community partners can work to support both livable and resilient environments. Presenters identified municipal, departmental, and broader coalition efforts to help communities thrive in the face of challenging conditions such as weather and COVID. Featured speakers included:

- **ZACHARY EICHHOLZ**  
Deputy Community & Economic  
Development Director &  
Sustainability Manager,  
City of Cape Canaveral
- **BRENDA DEFOE-SURPRENANT**  
City Planner, City of Cape Canaveral
- **PAUL S. LEWIS**  
FAICP, Chief Planning Manager,  
City of Orlando
- **SUSAN BERGER**  
Aging System Policy Coordinator,  
Sarasota County Health and Human  
Services
- **REBECCA ROBERTS**  
Director of Communications,  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- **VICTORIA FUNES**  
Associate State Director,  
AARP Florida

## SESSION FOUR

### *Advancing our Age-Friendly Communities*

Our fourth and final session will identify a plethora of resources to propel your community's age-friendly efforts. National and statewide resources from AARP and several state departments will be shared for inspiration and actionable next steps. Session Four will be featuring:

- **RICHARD PRUDOM**  
Secretary,  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- **GAIL HOLLEY**  
Safe Mobility for Life Program  
and Research Manager, Florida  
Department of Transportation
- **MIAMI-DADE AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE**
- **BILL ARMBRUSTER**  
Senior Advisor,  
AARP Livable Communities

# Final Event!

October 7  
10AM - 12PM

## AGE-FRIENDLY SHARING SYMPOSIUM SERIES

A MAP TO LIVABLE FLORIDA

## ADVANCING OUR AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Our fourth and final session will identify a plethora of resources to propel your community's age-friendly efforts. National and statewide resources from AARP and several state departments will be shared for inspiration and actionable next steps.

### FEATURED SPEAKERS

- **Richard Prudom** *Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs*
- **Gail Holley** *Safe Mobility for Life Program and Research Manager, Florida Department of Transportation*
- **Bill Armbruster** *Senior Advisor, AARP Livable Communities*

Register Online at

[aarp.cvent.com/2021AgeFriendlySymposium](https://aarp.cvent.com/2021AgeFriendlySymposium)



Share & Learn Ways to Make Florida a Place for All People to Live Well and Age Well





## MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR LGBTQ+ ELDERS

*Susan Talbott, ACBSW,  
LGBTQ+ Support Counselor at EPIC  
Steven Halstead,  
Chair of LGBT Elder Initiative*

According to SAGE, one of the country's oldest organization advocating for LGBT elders, in 2018, approximately three million Americans identified as a member of the LGBT community. That estimate is expected to jump to seven million by 2030. It has become glaringly apparent that service provision for our elders needs to not only include our LGBTQ+ elders, but we must also recognize their unique challenges and strengths.

This generation of LGBTQ+ elders has lived many years full of fear and discrimination because of the stigma they faced. Fears such as threats of physical violence, job discrimination, social exclusion, and political inequality have followed our elders for most of their adult life.

Conversely, our LGBTQ+ elders are socially intelligent and highly creative. Years of being change agents have made this generation courageous, empathetic, and resilient—all traits that speak to strong character and integrity.

These statistics are eye-opening:

- 76 percent of our LGBTQ+ elders fear having inadequate family and/or social support as they age.
- 60 percent worry about verbal or physical harassment, from both staff and other residents, in long-term care facilities.
- 80 percent would welcome signs or symbols that indicate businesses, organizations, or facilities are open and inclusive.

LGBTQ+ elders are twice as likely to live alone or be unpartnered as their hetero counterparts and four times less likely to have children to support them. Many of our elders have formed "chosen families" over their lifetimes. These chosen families consist of adults who are all of similar ages. This presents a challenge as older adults are often caring for older adults.

As a society, we have limited services to care for the unique needs of the underserved LGBTQ+ elders in our community. Identifying and understanding these challenges faced by our elders allows us to provide person-focused care. Person-focused care affords us the opportunity to tailor care plans to each individual, allowing us to provide the best care possible to our elders whether in a care setting or in the community.

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas has a community of service providers who volunteer for Better Living for Seniors. This group was formed in 1988 and holds quarterly consortiums. Including their Board of Directors, they additionally have nine committees, one of which is the LGBT Elder Initiative. This committee is actively creating partnerships with business organizations and other community service providers to build an inclusive network of services for our underserved LGBT elder population, 55+. The members are also committed to educating other service providers about the unique needs of our LGBTQ+ elders. The committee launched a website, [lgbtelderinitiativepinellas.info](http://lgbtelderinitiativepinellas.info), in Jan of 2021 and has a faithful following on Facebook.

The committee has also partnered with the Alzheimer's Association and

presented the documentary Gen-Silent virtually through their monthly Pride Bus event. The documentary reached over 80 individuals and professionals and initiated much needed conversation on how to best serve the community.

On October 16, 2021, the Gulfport Senior Center will be hosting a FREE LGBT Senior Resource Expo where LGBT elders can meet and learn about local companies that are diverse and affirming, including home health care agencies, attorneys, restaurants, physicians, social services, and more.

Members of the initiative also formed a subcommittee to focus on education and training for community organizations on LGBT history and cultural competency. The goal is to give providers a better understanding on how to best serve our LGBTQ+ elders. The committee has partnered with EPIC, a member of Empath Health, to specifically serve our LGBTQ+ elders and educate our providers. This training is based on work by SAGE at the national level. The workshop includes information such as the following:

- Key terms and usage
- A description of the unique needs, concerns, and strengths of our LGBTQ+ elders
- Discussion about individual and organizational best practices in service provision
- Discussion as to why this information and best practices are important

EPIC's LGBTQ+ Support Services program and the committee have educated over a dozen organizations and community partners throughout this year including the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas. For more information, visit the [LGBT Elder Initiative](http://LGBT Elder Initiative) website, or contact the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas.

# 10 WAYS TO LOVE YOUR BRAIN



**START NOW.** It's never too late or too early to incorporate healthy habits.



## BREAK A SWEAT

Engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates heart rate and increases blood flow. Studies have found that physical activity reduces risk of cognitive decline.



## HIT THE BOOKS

Formal education will help reduce risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Take a class at a local college, community center or online.



## BUTT OUT

Smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce risk to levels comparable to those who have not smoked.



## FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke – obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes – negatively impact your cognitive health.



## STUMP YOURSELF

Challenge your mind. Build a piece of furniture. Play games of strategy, like bridge.

**Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body.**

## HEADS UP!

Brain injury can raise risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt and use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike.



## BUDDY UP

Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Find ways to be part of your local community or share activities with friends and family.



## TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Some studies link depression with cognitive decline, so seek treatment if you have depression, anxiety or stress.



## CATCH SOME ZZZ'S

Not getting enough sleep may result in problems with memory and thinking.



## FUEL UP RIGHT

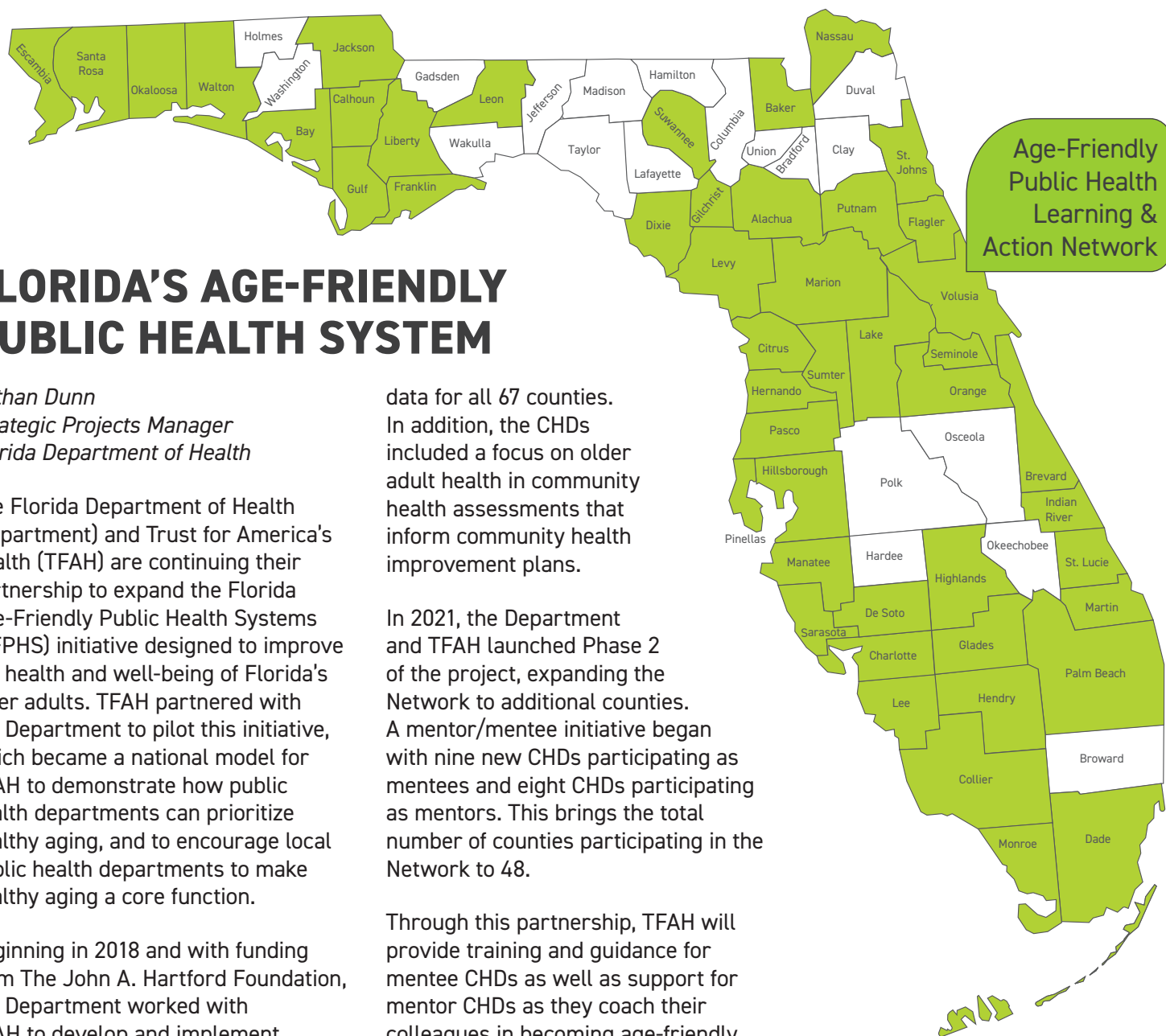
Eat a balanced diet that is higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline.



Visit [alz.org/10ways](http://alz.org/10ways) to learn more.

alzheimer's  association®

THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS.®



## FLORIDA'S AGE-FRIENDLY PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

*Nathan Dunn*  
Strategic Projects Manager  
Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health (Department) and Trust for America's Health (TFAH) are continuing their partnership to expand the Florida Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) initiative designed to improve the health and well-being of Florida's older adults. TFAH partnered with the Department to pilot this initiative, which became a national model for TFAH to demonstrate how public health departments can prioritize healthy aging, and to encourage local public health departments to make healthy aging a core function.

Beginning in 2018 and with funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Department worked with TFAH to develop and implement a process through which county health departments (CHDs) joined the Florida AFPHS Learning and Action Network (Network). During Phase 1 of the initiative, Department staff in 37 counties collaborated with age-friendly partners to identify opportunities to improve the health and well-being of Florida's older adults. These CHDs created a vision and action plan to prioritize healthy aging planning as well as expanding services to include older adults. They also contributed to the development of the Florida Health CHARTS Aging in Florida profiles, which provides crucial demographic, economic, and health

data for all 67 counties. In addition, the CHDs included a focus on older adult health in community health assessments that inform community health improvement plans.

In 2021, the Department and TFAH launched Phase 2 of the project, expanding the Network to additional counties. A mentor/mentee initiative began with nine new CHDs participating as mentees and eight CHDs participating as mentors. This brings the total number of counties participating in the Network to 48.

Through this partnership, TFAH will provide training and guidance for mentee CHDs as well as support for mentor CHDs as they coach their colleagues in becoming age-friendly. TFAH will oversee the development of age-friendly vision and action plans for new Network participants to identify older adult health priorities unique to each county. In addition, Phase 2 will include enhancements to the Aging in Florida profiles on FLHealthCHARTS to facilitate the work of CHDs in addressing health disparities in their communities. All Network CHDs will be encouraged to enroll in TFAH's AFPHS Recognition Program that requires the completion of [10 foundational healthy aging activities](#). The Recognition Program will help center healthy aging as a core public health function by

requiring changes in areas such as collaboration with organizations serving older adults, emergency preparedness for this critical population, and the collection and review of data on the health of older adults in our communities.

The Department and TFAH will continue to support CHDs as they embark on this next phase of the AFPHS initiative with a goal of improving the health of Florida's older adults through crucial partnerships, expanded programs and services, and enhanced actions toward health equity.



# A Phone Call Becomes a Lifeline

Carmel Ferrer  
Senior Editor, AARP Foundation

When the pandemic endangered one of her Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants, Maritza Lopez sprang into action.

As the coronavirus pandemic sparked nationwide shutdowns in March 2020, Maritza Lopez got on the phone. Maritza is project director for the AARP Foundation SCSEP office in Miami. SCSEP helps unemployed adults who are over 55 with very low income sharpen their job skills through temporary, paid community service work and training at local nonprofits and public agencies (known as "host agencies").

But now Maritza had to call all the SCSEP participants in her region and tell them their host agencies would be closing immediately, in accordance with Miami-Dade County's COVID-19 state of emergency.

Program participants earn a modest income, and their SCSEP experience often leads to full-time employment. SCSEP would continue to provide its participants with paychecks during the shutdown—but Maritza discovered that one participant needed much more.

One host agency, an independent living community, told her that the only SCSEP participant who trained there had already left. At that time, no one mentioned that the 69-year-old man was very ill.

"Two days later, when I finally got to talk to him, he was unintelligible," Maritza says. "He could hardly speak and was having trouble breathing." The participant had already called his doctor and been tested for the



coronavirus but hadn't received the results.

## Above and Beyond the Job Description

Quickly, Maritza assessed the situation. "I asked him if he had family or someone that could help him. He said no, he lived alone," she says. "I also asked him if he had food. He said that he had minimal food and could not go out to purchase it."

Maritza took immediate action. First, she reached out to the county, food pantries, Meals on Wheels, and local churches. Then she called her personal contacts. "All I had in the back of my mind was to either gather some food from my pantry or try to purchase food and drop it off at his doorstep," she says. "I was in a hurry and on a mission!"

Eventually, she connected with the Miami-Dade County 311 Contact Center, the main resource for county services. It took nearly an hour to get through. After explaining the situation and stressing its urgency, she was able to register the participant for county meal services—but the required pre-service assessment call probably wouldn't happen for several days.

Less than 10 minutes later, the participant phoned Maritza to tell her

that somebody from 311 had called, done the assessment, and approved him. He began receiving meals that same day, with a week's worth of food delivered to his home every Sunday.

"He was so grateful that he was crying on the phone," says Maritza. His only request was that she continue to call him daily so he wouldn't feel scared and alone. "With all of my heart and soul, I complied and continue to do so."

## A Cause Worth Fighting For

The participant's coronavirus test came back negative and, now that he had enough food, his health improved. He stays in regular contact with Maritza and is continuing his training remotely. He and the other SCSEP participants connect through biweekly conference calls with Maritza, sharing laughs, updates, and resources.

Although the participant's food delivery ended in October, his much-improved health means he's able to go out and purchase his own food. "He's very content," Maritza says.

"When you hear in their voices the despair, fear, and sadness, it's worth fighting for this cause," she adds. "Although it is a sad situation, we are here to face it together as a team, with full dedication, love, and compassion."



## SUPPORTING MOBILITY INDEPENDENCE THROUGH AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

*Gail Holley  
Safe Mobility for Life Program  
and Research Manager  
Florida Department of Transportation*

Florida is home to many different types of communities, from the rural roads of Chipley to the urban streets of downtown Miami. While some people have access to fixed transit routes or bikeshare, others may use paratransit and transportation network companies to fill in the gaps.

Many of us rely solely on driving to get from place to place, creating car-dependency, not independence. If something happens to our vehicle or we are unable to continue driving safely, the decision to stop driving should not mean losing access to the places we need and want to

go. We can achieve true mobility independence, the ability to get around whether we are driving or not, by learning about the different transportation options available and practicing them in our everyday lives.

Many of us reach for the car keys out of habit. Consider switching things up occasionally. Choosing to use Uber or another transit option for a casual trip to the store will help us adapt to a new system in a low-pressure environment, decreasing the stress if we get a flat tire and suddenly need a ride. When we give ourselves time to learn, we can become just as confident using new transportation modes as we are with driving.

Access to safe mobility options is equally as important as knowing

how to use them. Transportation is vital to maintaining connection to our communities, enabling us to retain our quality of life whether we are driving or not. The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition's Aging in Place webpage can teach you how to evaluate the features you need in a community to help you successfully age in place. Resources on this page include a video overview of Age-Friendly Communities and their benefits, information about the features and services of Age-Friendly Communities, transportation options, and more. Visit [SafeMobilityFL.com/AginginPlace.htm](https://www.SafeMobilityFL.com/AginginPlace.htm) to get started.

By working together at all levels and tapping into existing transportation resources, we can help everyone remain safe, mobile, and independent for life.



# Medicare Options Abound During Open Enrollment

*Jamila Griffin, MS, FCCM  
SHINE Statewide Program Director  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Medicare's Open Enrollment Period occurs each year from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. This period provides a window of opportunity for making changes in a beneficiary's current Medicare coverage.

"Annual Notice of Change" letters are sent near the end of September from plans, describing any changes in benefits, premiums, networks, or service areas. It is very important to read through these changes, as they may greatly affect a beneficiary's health or drug costs for the coming year. During the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, beneficiaries should evaluate their coverage and make plan adjustments to better meet their needs. Any changes made during Open Enrollment are effective January 1.

Let's review the options available to all Medicare beneficiaries during this period.

## Stay in Original Medicare

Those enrolled in Original Medicare have nationwide coverage for inpatient (Part A) and outpatient (Part B) services. Through private insurers, beneficiaries may also enroll in prescription drug coverage (Part D) as well as a Medicare Supplement Plan (Medigap) which bridges the cost gaps associated with Original Medicare. Those cost gaps include copays, co-insurance, deductibles, Part B excess charges for non-assignment claims, as well as health coverage while on foreign travel. Many beneficiaries find their current coverage is sufficient. If that is your case, you do not need to do anything during Open Enrollment.

## Add or Change Medicare Prescription Drug Plans

For various reasons, some beneficiaries did not elect drug coverage when they first enrolled in Original Medicare. If you find yourself needing to add drug coverage, Open Enrollment is the time to enroll in a Part D plan. However, keep in mind that if you have been without drug coverage for more than a couple of months, a late enrollment penalty may be added to the plan premium. These penalties can add up quickly; if you have not enrolled in Part D, do not delay any longer.

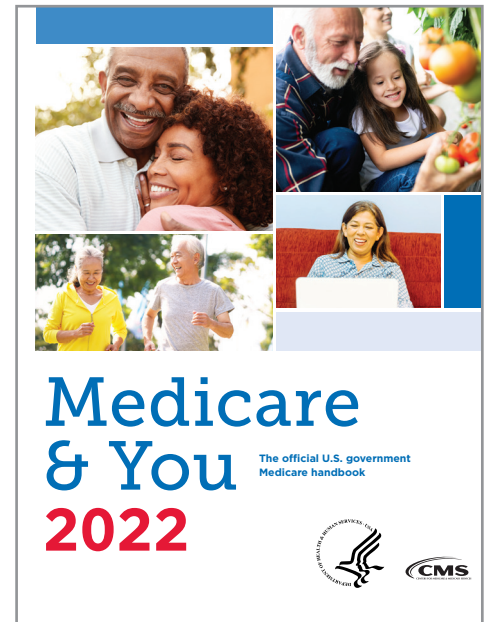
If you currently have drug coverage, you also need to take a good look at your plan. Most Medicare drug plans have a coverage gap. This means there's a temporary limit on what the drug plan will cover for drugs. Therefore, once you and your plan have spent \$4,430 on covered drugs in 2022, you're in the coverage gap. Once you are in the coverage gap additional out of pocket cost may occur. This amount varies each year, therefore, it is best to review your plan annually during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period with a SHINE counselor.

## Switch From Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C)

Another Medicare option that includes medical care and can provide prescription drug coverage is a Medicare Advantage plan (Part C). These plans are also offered by private insurers and must include everything Parts A and B cover. However, while Original Medicare offers nationwide coverage, Advantage plans are more restricted by regions and networks of providers.

Before committing to a Part C plan, beneficiaries should always ask three important questions:

- Does my doctor accept the plan?
- Are all my drugs covered?



- Am I covered if I travel outside the area?

Despite the restrictions, Advantage plans are very attractive to many beneficiaries because many have relatively low annual premiums. Some are offered premium-free. Although anyone enrolled in an Advantage plan still pays the Part B premium, some plans reimburse all or part of this expense.

## Return to Original Medicare From an Advantage Plan (Part C)

"Inexpensive" insurance is no bargain if it fails to protect against very high health costs. During Open Enrollment, a beneficiary enrolled in a Part C plan may switch back to Original Medicare with a stand-alone Part D plan.

If you have questions or need more information about your Medicare options, call 1-800-963-5337 and ask for a SHINE counselor. You may also contact SHINE on its website at [floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx](https://floridashine.org/Contact-Us.aspx).

Click [here](#) to view the 2022 *Medicare and You* book for more information and updates.



## BRINGING THE LOST HOME PROJECT

Lee County Sheriff's Office K9 Team uses the Scent Preservation Kit® to find missing endangered person with autism—this is the 87th find by Florida Bringing the Lost Home Project Teams! Great job, Deputy First Class Bellini and K9 Murphy, and thanks to Lee County Sheriff's Office!



Credit: @scentevidencek9  
via Twitter

**Pictured Right:  
Deputy First Class  
Bellini and K9  
Murphy**

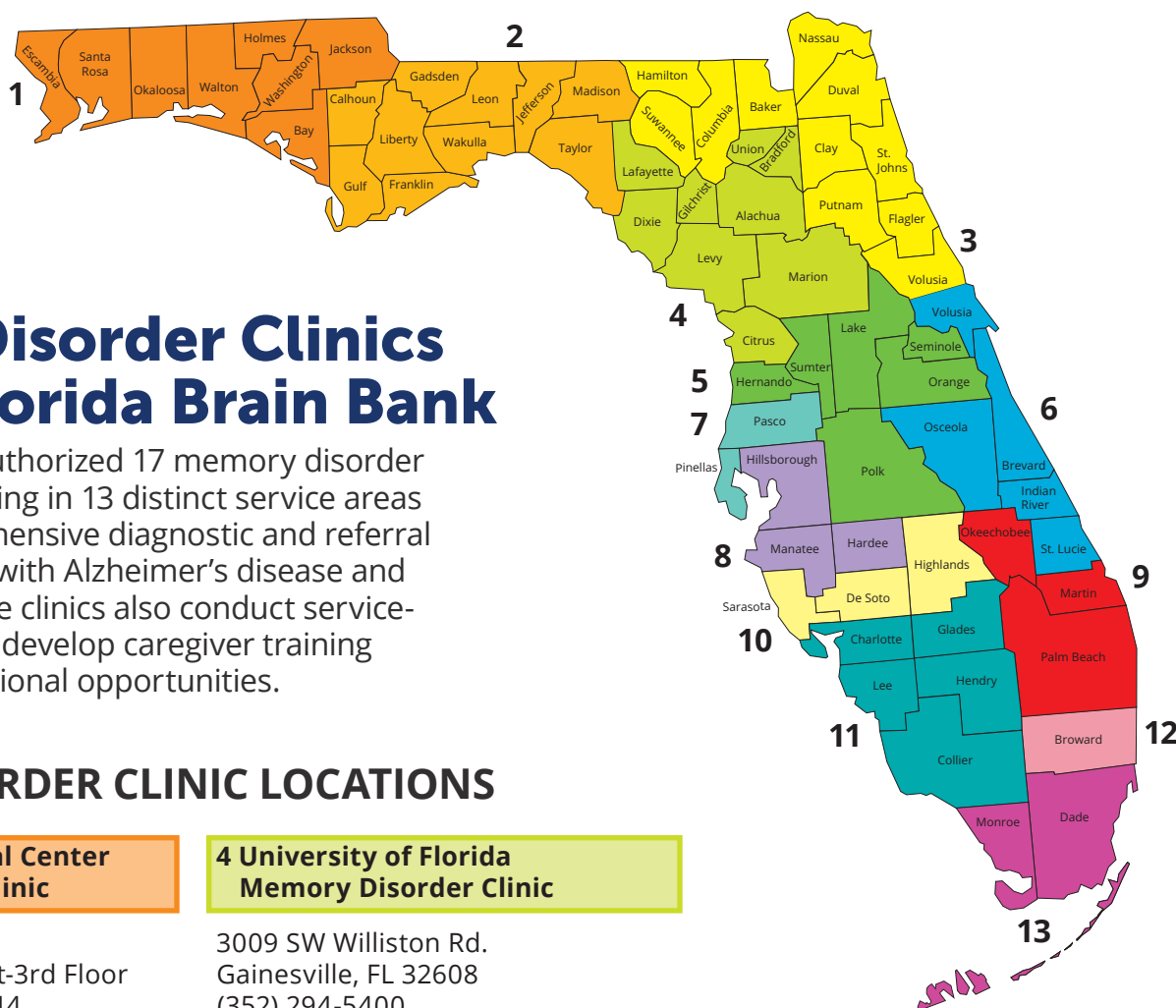


Breast cancer mortality is **decreasing** for both black and white women, especially among younger women.

However, even though death rates are going down, we need to do more to **level the field**.



[www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast)



## Memory Disorder Clinics and the Florida Brain Bank

The legislature has authorized 17 memory disorder clinics (MDCs) operating in 13 distinct service areas that provide comprehensive diagnostic and referral services for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. The clinics also conduct service-related research and develop caregiver training materials and educational opportunities.

### MEMORY DISORDER CLINIC LOCATIONS

#### 1 West Florida Medical Center Memory Disorder Clinic

8333 N. Davis Highway  
Neurology Department-3rd Floor  
Pensacola, Florida 32514  
(850) 474-8353  
[medicalcenterclinic.com](http://medicalcenterclinic.com)

#### 2 Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Memory Disorder Clinic

1401 Centerville Rd., Ste. 504  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
(850) 431-5037  
[TMH.org/Memory](http://TMH.org/Memory)

#### 3 Mayo Clinic Jacksonville Memory Disorder Clinic

4500 San Pablo Rd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32224  
(904) 953-2677  
[mayoclinic.org/departments-centers/neurology/memory-disorder-clinic/florida/overview](http://mayoclinic.org/departments-centers/neurology/memory-disorder-clinic/florida/overview)

#### 4 University of Florida Memory Disorder Clinic

3009 SW Williston Rd.  
Gainesville, FL 32608  
(352) 294-5400  
[fixel.ufhealth.org/getting-care/alzheimers-memory-dementia-ms](http://fixel.ufhealth.org/getting-care/alzheimers-memory-dementia-ms)

#### 5 Orlando Health Center for Aging and Memory Disorder Clinic

32 West Gore Street  
Orlando, FL 32806  
(321) 841-9700  
[orlandohealth.com/services-and-specialties/memory-disorder-clinic](http://orlandohealth.com/services-and-specialties/memory-disorder-clinic)

#### 5 AdventHealth Memory Disorder Clinic

1573 W. Fairbanks Ave, Ste. 210  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
(407) 392-9237  
[AHMaturingMinds.com](http://AHMaturingMinds.com)

#### 6 Health First Memory Disorder Clinic

3661 S Babcock St.  
Melbourne, FL 32901  
(321) 434-7612  
[HF.org](http://HF.org)

#### 7 Morton Plant Madonna Ptak Center for Alzheimer's Research and Memory Disorders Clinic

430 Morton Plant St., Ste. 401  
Clearwater, FL 33756  
(727) 298-6025  
[BayCareMemories.org](http://BayCareMemories.org)

NOTE: County coloring represents area served by the corresponding Memory Disorder Clinic.

CONTINUED



**8 University of South Florida  
Memory Disorder Clinic**

3515 E Fletcher Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33613  
(813) 974-3100  
[health.usf.edu/care/psychiatry/services-specialties/memory-disorders](http://health.usf.edu/care/psychiatry/services-specialties/memory-disorders)

**9 St. Mary's Medical Center  
Memory Disorder Clinic at Palm  
Beach Neuroscience Institute**

901 Village Blvd., Ste. 702  
West Palm Beach, FL 33409  
(561) 990-2135  
8756 Boynton Beach Blvd., Ste. 2500  
Boynton Beach, FL 33472  
(561) 990-2135  
[MDC.PBNI.com](http://MDC.PBNI.com)

**9 Florida Atlantic University Louis  
and Anne Green Memory and  
Wellness Center**

777 Glades Rd., Bldg. AZ-79  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
(561) 297-0502  
[fau.edu/memorywellnesscenter](http://fau.edu/memorywellnesscenter)

**10 Sarasota Memorial Memory  
Disorder Clinic**

1515 S Osprey Ave., Ste. A-1  
Sarasota, FL 34239  
(941) 917-7197  
[smh.com/Home/Services/Memory-Disorders](http://smh.com/Home/Services/Memory-Disorders)

**11 Lee Memorial LPG  
Memory Care**

12600 Creekside Ln., Ste. 7  
Fort Myers, FL 33919  
(239) 343-9220  
[leehealth.org/our-services/neurology/alzheimer-s-and-dementia-care-memory-care3](http://leehealth.org/our-services/neurology/alzheimer-s-and-dementia-care-memory-care3)

**12 Broward Health North Memory  
Disorder Center**

201 E Sample Rd.  
Deerfield Beach, FL 33064  
(954) 786-7392  
[browardhealth.org/services/memory-loss](http://browardhealth.org/services/memory-loss)

**13 University of Miami Center  
for Cognitive Neuroscience  
and Aging**

1695 NW 9th Ave., Ste. 3202  
Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 355-9065  
[cnsa.med.miami.edu](http://cnsa.med.miami.edu)

**13 Mt. Sinai Medical Center Wien  
Center for Alzheimer's Disease  
and Memory Disorders**

4302 Alton Rd., Ste. 650  
Miami Beach, FL 33140  
(305) 674-2543  
[msmc.com/neurosciences/wien-center-for-alzheimers-disease-memory-disorders](http://msmc.com/neurosciences/wien-center-for-alzheimers-disease-memory-disorders)

**13 The MIND Institute at Miami  
Jewish Health**

5200 NE 2nd Avenue  
Miami, FL 33137  
(305) 514-8652  
[miamijewishhealth.org/health/mind-institute](http://miamijewishhealth.org/health/mind-institute)

**BRAIN BANK  
LOCATIONS****5 State of Florida Brain Bank-  
Satellite Office Orlando  
Alzheimer's and Dementia  
Resource Center**

1410 Gene Street  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
(407) 436-7755  
24/7 Line: (407) 646-9864  
[adrccares.org/brainbank](http://adrccares.org/brainbank)

**13 State of Florida Brain Bank  
Wien Center for Alzheimer's  
Disease and Memory Disorders**

4302 Alton Road, Suite 650  
Miami Beach, Florida 33140  
(305) 674-2018  
[msmc.com/neurosciences/wien-center-florida-brain-bank](http://msmc.com/neurosciences/wien-center-florida-brain-bank)







# STAY TUNED for the Fall Issue of *Elder Update!*

Current and past issues of the magazine can be accessed online at [elderaffairs.org/publications-reports/elder-update](https://elderaffairs.org/publications-reports/elder-update).

The *Elder Update* is a complimentary publication produced by the Department of Elder Affairs. It is distributed to over 45,000 Floridians including seniors, caregivers, policymakers, and elder-care service providers.

To subscribe to the *Elder Update*, fill out the online form at [elderaffairs.org/publications-reports/elder-update](https://elderaffairs.org/publications-reports/elder-update).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

- 1 International Day for Older Persons
- 7 Age-Friendly Sharing Symposium: Session Four
- 8 National Depression Screening Day
- 10 World Mental Health Day
- 11 Indigenous Peoples Day
- 16 National Train Your Brain Day
- 29 World Stroke Day
- 31 Halloween

### NOVEMBER

National Caregivers Appreciation Month

- 2 Election Day
- 7 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 11 Veterans Day
- 13 World Kindness Day
- 25 Thanksgiving Day
- 26 Black Friday
- 29 Cyber Monday

