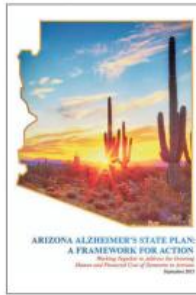


MORE THAN 5 MILLION AMERICANS ARE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S AND AS MANY AS 16 MILLION WILL HAVE THE DISEASE IN 2050



ARIZONA ALZHEIMER'S STATE PLAN

## Experts have created a framework of action against this deadly disease



**T**he Arizona Alzheimer's State Plan is a collaborative document with goals and recommendations to address the growing human and financial cost of dementia in Arizona. The Plan's vision is that there will be quality care and supportive services available, accessible and acceptable throughout Arizona. "The Plan is meant to be a living, usable document for everyone in Arizona who has been impacted by dementia to utilize as a tool for support," said James Fitzpatrick, MAS, Program and Advocacy Director for the Alzheimer's Association Desert Southwest Chapter.

The Plan includes five goals with several recommendations for each:

- 1 Maximize public awareness and understanding
- 2 Develop new and enhance existing supports for people with Alzheimer's and their families
- 3 Expand the dementia-capable workforce in Arizona
- 4 Advance and disseminate research
- 5 Create a dementia-capable system in Arizona

**Implementation and stakeholders**

More than 100 stakeholders from various entities throughout Arizona are overseeing the Plan's implementation. The list includes government agencies, non-profits, elected officials and private citizens.

**Next steps**

The Framework for Action was released a year ago. The next phase — the release of the "Call to Action Plan" — is set to be disseminated to the public at the end of November 2016. It will include concrete actions that targeted audiences — such as caregivers, persons living with the disease, researchers and educators, volunteer organizations, workforce and policy-makers — can actively carry out to achieve the goals of the plan.

**For more info**

ARIZONA ALZHEIMER'S STATE PLAN: [govtrans.az.gov/aging/Documents/AZAlzheimersStatePlanAFrameworkforAction.pdf](http://govtrans.az.gov/aging/Documents/AZAlzheimersStatePlanAFrameworkforAction.pdf)

TEMPE

### At the forefront of dementia awareness

**T**he City of Tempe has been chosen by the White House to be one of five communities to transition into a "dementia-friendly community" using a roadmap developed by the White House Conference on Aging and Dementia Friendly America.

But what is a dementia-friendly city? "Becoming a dementia-friendly city is all about preparing for the future

growth of dementia in our community," said Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell. "One in nine seniors has some form of dementia, meaning that in Tempe today, more than 1,500 people live with dementia." Mitchell said that over the next ten years, there will be a 71 percent increase in the number of Arizona residents with dementia.



Mayor Mark Mitchell

"That is the biggest projected increase of any state in the country," Mitchell noted. "The City of Tempe is taking an all-sector approach (e.g., businesses, legal, financial and faith communities) which means everyone plays a role. With our dementia-friendly initiative, we can prove we are not powerless against this devastating disease. We can also show that our neighbors facing dementia are not alone and that we can provide support to those living with dementia."

**Shining a light on dementia**

In 2014, Mitchell brought the topic of becoming dementia-friendly to the Tempe City Council.

"I had heard about a city in Minnesota that was going through the process of becoming dementia-friendly and I thought this could shine some light on a growing issue," he said. "My family had already been dealing with dementia and Alzheimer's for several years; my mom was first diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment and then a few years later, Alzheimer's." Mayor Mitchell's mother, Marianne Mitchell, recently began living full-time at a care facility that specializes in dementia.

**Impact on families**

Mitchell said that obviously his family is not the only one in Tempe that has a family member living with dementia.

"We are lucky — we are able to provide support for my mom," he said. "But many of our residents are unable to provide that level of care to their loved ones, and even more distressing is the fact that one in seven seniors with dementia currently lives alone."

Mitchell points out that if those with Alzheimer's and dementia were the only people impacted by this epidemic it would be serious enough.

"Unfortunately, it is well-documented that this disease also seriously impacts the physical and mental health of the loved ones who take care of them, creating an exponential effect on the number of people negatively impacted by dementia," he said. "This is why our community needs to prepare and why becoming dementia-friendly is a priority of mine."



Sick 9/21a

**PLEASE PROOF** — Brandon Barkwell lost his dad Brian to younger-onset Alzheimer's Disease and has since started Project YAFA (Young Advocates Fighting Alzheimer's) at Chaparral High School. Below, Brandon talks with his friends and fellow advocates, Cole Gibson, 16, right and John Henry Coligny 17, center, about their advocacy efforts in raising awareness in how Alzheimer's Disease affects families including children.

BRANDON BARKWELL'S STORY

### How Alzheimer's affects families, including young children

**S**eventeen-year-old Brandon Barkwell was just five years old when his father, Brian, was diagnosed at age 51 with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease.

After a decade-long battle with Alzheimer's, Brian passed away on May 19, 2015. To honor his memory, Brandon made a commitment to advocate for, raise awareness about and raise funds for Alzheimer's research in order to make a difference for future generations.

One of Brandon's primary advocacy efforts revolves around Project YAFA (Young Advocates Fighting Alzheimer's), a group he founded at Chaparral High School in Scottsdale. The group aims to give voice to the fact that Alzheimer's disease doesn't just affect the elderly; it also affects families, many of whom still have children at home.

We recently spoke with Brandon about his life, his father and his Alzheimer's advocacy efforts. You can learn more about Brandon on his website, [BarkysHope.com](http://BarkysHope.com).

**WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST MEMORIES OF YOUR FATHER?**

I was in kindergarten when my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. He seemed fine for the next several years, but he didn't work like the other dads. However, he was always a lot of fun and had a great sense of humor. He lived life to the fullest and never let on that there was

anything wrong. He provided a safe, secure world for me as his son as long as he could.

**WHEN DID YOU REALIZE THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT HIM VERSUS YOUR FRIENDS' FATHERS?**

I first knew there was something different about my father when I was in sixth grade. In the early years, he had profound memory loss and he became agitated and paranoid. The hardest part of this was watching my father's life slowly deteriorate. This was difficult for me because my family and I seemed to no longer fit into typical social situations. My mom did an amazing job trying to balance it all from multiple perspectives.

**WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, DID YOUR FRIENDS UNDERSTAND YOUR SITUATION?**

I frequently had to explain to new friends and neighbors that my dad had Alzheimer's. Most of the time it became more than they could handle.

**WHAT TYPES OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN AND WHY?**

My advocacy efforts started when I was just 13 and have focused on raising awareness about how Alzheimer's affects entire families, including young children. It is important to get a grassroots effort of young people involved in being passionate about finding a cure for Alzheimer's. It is critical to all of us.



"I was given enormous responsibilities at a really young age but I happily chipped in because it was what was needed in our home."

— Brandon Barkwell