Public health works on a population level to protect and improve the health and safety of an entire community or group of people. Public health promotes healthy lifestyles, prevents illnesses and injuries, and detects and controls diseases. By working with diverse communities, public health expands the reach and impact of health care efforts.

**What is Public Health?**

Through public health we can:
- Promote and encourage healthy behaviors
- Improve management of health conditions to avert complications
- Prevent injuries
- Prevent epidemics and spread of disease
- Protect against environmental hazards

**Public Health at Work:**
- Vaccinations to prevent disease
- Quit smoking campaigns
- Emergency preparedness
- Safe drinking water

**What makes a health problem a public health issue?**
- The burden is large
- There are ways to intervene
- The impact is major

Alzheimer's Association
WHY ALZHEIMER’S IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

“Alzheimer’s is the most under-recognized threat to public health in the 21st century.”
Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General and former CDC Director

While Alzheimer’s has traditionally been seen as an aging issue, ALZHEIMER’S is a PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE because:

- **The BURDEN is LARGE** and growing larger
  - More than five million people are living with Alzheimer’s, two-thirds of whom are women; the number of people with the disease is projected to triple to as many as 16 million in 2050
  - Annual costs exceed quarter of a trillion dollars ($259 billion in 2017) and costs are expected to rise to $1.1 trillion in 2050

- **Impacts**
  - Governments – Medicare and Medicaid bear two-thirds of the health and long term care costs of those with Alzheimer’s

- **Burden**
  - Among people with dementia, one in every four hospitalizations is preventable
  - More than 15 MILLION caregivers have over $10 BILLION in additional health care costs each year due to caregiver burden

- **Ways to INTERVENE**
  - Promoting prevention – regular physical activity, attention to heart health can reduce the risk of cognitive decline and may reduce risk of Alzheimer’s
  - Promoting early detection and diagnosis – as many as half of people with Alzheimer’s are not diagnosed, and less than half of the diagnosed are not aware of the diagnosis
  - Data collection – Collecting data on subjective cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s caregivers can help identify the burden and impact in each state

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Public Health Road Map