Merck Foundation Supports New Programs to Improve Care for Alzheimer’s Patients And Caregivers in the United States

Release Date:
Wednesday, August 15, 2018 9:00 am EDT

Terms:
Corporate News  Corporate Responsibility News  Latest News

Dateline City:
KENILWORTH, N.J.

KENILWORTH, N.J., Aug. 15, 2018 -- The Merck Foundation (the Foundation) is supporting two new programs to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers. With a focus on underserved rural and urban populations in New England and Minnesota, these programs are part of the Foundation’s $5 million effort to reduce disparities in health care for underserved communities affected by Alzheimer’s. Learn more here.

The Foundation has selected the Alzheimer's Association: Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter and HealthPartners as program partners to strengthen health care coordination for people living with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. Given the complexity of the disease, families that receive coordinated care experience improved health outcomes and quality of life.

Alzheimer’s disease is a progressive neurodegenerative condition that has become the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. An estimated 5.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s and the number is estimated to increase to up to 9.1 million people by 2030.

“Alzheimer’s disease is affecting a growing number of patients and their families as our population ages” says Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, chief patient officer, Merck and vice chair, Merck Foundation Board of Trustees. “We are optimistic these programs will help improve access to care and address disparities.”

The Foundation’s goal is to advance Alzheimer’s care by supporting evidence-based programs with strong potential for replication and disseminating best practices. Both implementing partners aim to foster collaboration across the health and social service sectors, increase access to care, and improve overall quality of life.

Alzheimer’s Association: Expanding Dementia Care Coordination - The Alzheimer’s Association, Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter, will expand its Dementia Care Coordination program, increasing access to care and support for vulnerable populations in underserved urban and rural areas in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

“The Dementia Care Coordination program has been effective in improving outcomes for Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers,” said Nicole McGurin, director, Family Services, Alzheimer’s Association, Massachusetts/New Hampshire Chapter. “We look forward to expanding our evidence-informed program to reach more underserved populations in our region.”

HealthPartners Center for Memory and Aging: The Care Ecosystem - HealthPartners Center for Memory and Aging, in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), will implement UCSF’s Care Ecosystem program in Minnesota to coordinate care for people with dementia and their caregivers living in rural areas with limited access to specialty care.

“Our mission is to reduce disparities and improve health outcomes among rural and diverse populations in Minnesota,” said Dr. Michael Rosenbloom, clinical director, HealthPartners Center for Memory and Aging. “Implementing this program will help improve coordination and connections with community resources, such as adult day programs and Meals on Wheels, which is critical to positive outcomes for this population.”

The two programs follow an earlier grant to North Carolina A&T State University Center for Outreach in Alzheimer’s, Aging and Community Health to educate and raise awareness about Alzheimer’s disease among vulnerable populations in rural North Carolina communities.

Supporting Innovative Approaches to Improve Care

Merck is committed to discovering smart, sustainable ways to expand global access to health care and, through the Merck Foundation, supports innovative partnerships and approaches to improve the health of vulnerable and underserved populations. The Merck Foundation’s support of people living with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers follows other recent investments to reduce health disparities and improve access to high-quality health care, such as the $16 million, five-year initiative, Bridging the Gap: Reducing Disparities in Diabetes Care and the $15 million, five-year Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care.

About the Merck Foundation
The Merck Foundation is a U.S.-based, private charitable foundation. Established in 1957 by Merck, a leading global biopharmaceutical company, the Foundation is funded entirely by the company and is Merck’s chief source of funding support to qualified non-profit charitable organizations. Since its inception, the Merck Foundation has contributed more than $896 million to support important initiatives that address societal needs and are consistent with Merck’s overall mission of inventing for life by bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world’s most challenging diseases. For more information, visit www.merckgiving.com.