



advocacy | action | answers on aging

## National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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### **Brain Health of Older Adults Focus of National Campaign**

**Washington, DC**—Today, the [Eldercare Locator](#), a program established and funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and administered by the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#) (n4a) launched a national campaign to help educate the public about the risks to brain health for older adults and simple strategies to help mitigate those risks.

In recent surveys of people over the age of 50, worry about the ability to stay mentally sharp is consistently ranked among the top concerns, surpassing such issues as having an adequate retirement fund or the ability to meet health care expenses. Meanwhile, the number of reported cases of brain health–related conditions is expected to rise with the aging of the baby boomer population. In a [2011 survey](#) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 13 percent of respondents, age 60 and older, reported increased confusion and memory loss in the preceding 12 months, and of that number, over 35 percent said they experienced functional difficulties that might require services and supports now, or in the future.

A brochure entitled, [Brain Health: You Can Make a Difference](#) is the centerpiece of the campaign, containing recommendations and resources to help older adults take charge of their brain health as they age. The information in the publication draws from materials developed by ACL, in partnership with the National Institutes of Health and the CDC.

“Helping people stay healthy as they age is a key part of helping them live independently in their communities, and brain health is a critical component of healthy aging,” said Kathy Greenlee, Administrator of ACL and Assistant Secretary for Aging. “This publication gives staff and volunteers at Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers, health departments, local clinics, and community organizations of all kinds a powerful, evidence-based tool to help debunk myths and share accurate information about what we can do to maintain brain health as we age.”

The campaign is called *Home for the Holidays* because it is conducted from Thanksgiving through the New Year, a time when older adults and their families often gather together, presenting an opportunity for discussion about important issues like brain health. [Past campaigns](#) showcased such topics as financial exploitation, falls prevention, transportation, housing and employment.

## **Brain Health of Older Adults Focus of National Campaign (cont.)**

n4a CEO Sandy Markwood noted, “We recognize how critical brain health is to ensuring successful aging. Across the nation, our members have developed innovative programs, not only to help educate older adults, their families and other caregivers about this issue, but also to connect them with critical brain health resources. This campaign was designed to help people realize that there are practical steps they can take to promote their brain health and to make them aware of the wide range of healthy aging services offered by the Aging Network.”

### **About n4a and the Eldercare Locator**

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is a 501c(3) membership association representing America’s national network of 618 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and providing a voice in the nation’s capital for the 246 Title VI Native American aging programs. The mission of n4a is to build the capacity of its members so they can better help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

The Eldercare Locator serves as an essential, trusted gateway to help older adults, caregivers and aging/health professionals navigate the maze of aging programs and services, as well as to assist them in identifying and accessing the resources that match their needs best. Contact the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

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