

# INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

**Avery Health - Education and Consulting** brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

**Kathey Avery**, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit [www.AveryHEC.com](http://www.AveryHEC.com)



The mission of the **Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy** is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

[www.ifpha.org](http://www.ifpha.org)

The IFPHA is grateful for the support of our sponsors.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## November is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

*As a community nurse I often get referrals for people having cognitive changes, including Alzheimer disease.*

For more than a year, my CHW's, LPN's and I, along with our other IFPHA partners, have followed and supported several of our clients and their families and friends until we have them in a safe place.

**What are the five most common types of dementia?**

- Alzheimer's disease
- Vascular dementia
- Lewy body dementia
- Fronto-temporal dementia
- Mixed dementia

### Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia, currently affecting 5.1 million people in the United States.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, "Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, where dementia symptoms gradually worsen over a number of years. In its early stages, memory loss is mild, but with late-stage Alzheimer's, individuals lose the ability to carry on a conversation and respond to their environment."

With Alzheimer's Disease, it is important to notice the cognitive impairment signs early on so you can know how to move forward with memory care treatment. Understanding the kinds of memory impairment that may lead to cognitive decline down the road can be important when treating Alzheimer's.

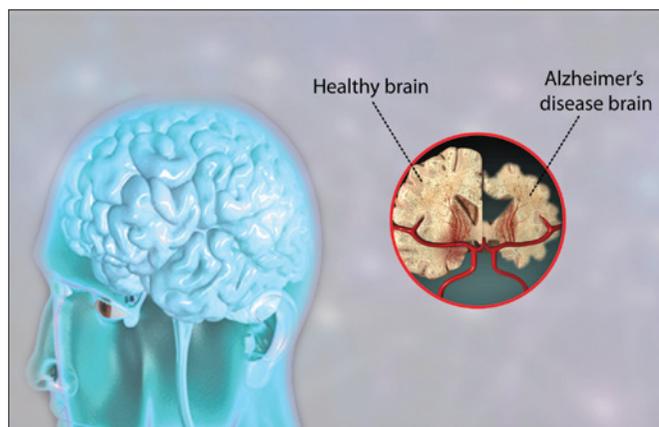
### The role of plaques and tangles

Two abnormal structures called plaques and tangles are prime suspects in damaging and killing nerve cells.

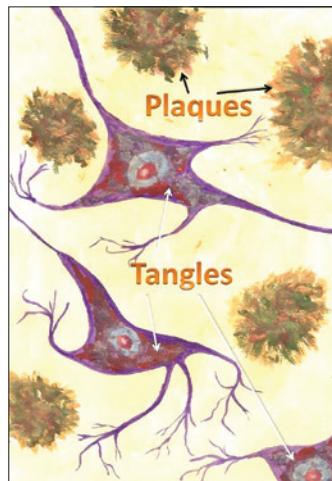
Plaques are deposits of a protein fragment called beta-amyloid that build up in the spaces between nerve cells.

Tangles are twisted fibers of another protein called tau (rhymes with "wow") that build up inside cells.

Plaques and tangles tend to spread through the cortex as Alzheimer's progresses.



Alzheimer's disease causes shrinkage (atrophy) of the posterior part of the brain.



Those with Alzheimer's develop plaques and tangles in areas important for memory.

Though most people develop some plaques and tangles as they age, those with Alzheimer's tend to develop far more. They also tend to develop them in a predictable pattern, beginning in areas important for memory before spreading to other regions.

Scientists do not know exactly what role plaques and tangles play in Alzheimer's disease. Most experts believe they somehow play a critical role in blocking communication among nerve cells and disrupting processes that cells need to survive.

It's the destruction and death of nerve cells that causes memory failure, personality changes, problems carrying out daily activities, and other symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

### Diseases that cause dementia

These conditions are the leading causes of dementia.

**Mixed dementia.** Many patients have mixed dementia, a combination of two or more types, such as Alzheimer's and vascular dementia.

**Alzheimer's disease** is one of the well-known forms of dementia. Alzheimer's is characterized by amyloid plaques and tangled fibers in the brain and by a loss of connections between nerve cells. Damage initially appears in the hippocampus, an area of the brain involved in memory formation, and gradually spreads.

## Create a Dementia Friendly Community



Alzheimer's affects 5.1 million people in the US.

Dementia Friendly WNC is committed to the well-being of people living with dementia and their families through a welcoming and knowledgeable community.

Their up-to-date information and teaching skills help make communities more dementia friendly by providing:



- Free Dementia Awareness Sessions for businesses and organizations
- Dementia Friendly Recognition for businesses and organizations
- Social Engagement Opportunities for people living with dementia
- Advocacy & Support

To make your business, church, or organization dementia friendly, visit [dementiafriendlywnc.org](http://dementiafriendlywnc.org).

**Vascular dementia** is the second most common form of dementia, accounting for 17% of people with dementia in the UK. This type of dementia is caused from damage to the vessels that supply blood to the brain. It tends to affect focus, organization, problem-solving, and speed of thinking more noticeably than memory.

**Lewy body dementia.** Abnormal protein deposits in the brain, called Lewy bodies, affect brain chemistry and lead to problems with behavior, mood, movement, and thinking.

**Frontotemporal disorders.** Degenerative damage to the brain's frontal and temporal lobes is the most common cause of dementia in people age 65 and younger. Symptoms might include apathy, difficulty communicating, walking, or working, emotional changes, and impulsive or inappropriate behaviors.

Sources: National Institute on Aging; Mayo Clinic.