

## “People living with dementia and their careers deserve better than this” – WHO Global Dementia Plan fails to meet target as dementia crisis looms

- *Only around 20 percent of World Health Organization (WHO) Member States have followed through on their 2017 National Dementia Plan (NDPs) promise ahead of looming 2025 deadline*
- *Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) is calling for an extension to the Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, as progress has gone backwards in some WHO Member States, including England and France*
- *Over 100 new NDPs need to be created in two years to reach Global Action Plan goals, a feat ADI says is impossible*
- *Dementia prevalence is on the rise with 55 million people living with the disease, and up to 85 percent of them not receiving treatment*

**GENEVA – 24 May 2023:** Three quarters of World Health Organization (WHO) Member States have failed on their promise to prioritise dementia, leading to an urgent call for an extension on the [Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia](#) at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva today by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI).

The call for an extension follows the disappointing findings from ADI's latest report 'From Plan to Impact VI', which found that only twenty percent (39 out of 194) of all World Health Organization (WHO) Member States have followed through with their 2017 promise to create a National Dementia Plan (NDP) by 2025.

“We're deeply disappointed that there's a need to call for an extension. People living with dementia and their carers deserve the urgent action they were promised back in 2017,” says ADI Chief Executive Officer, Paola Barbarino. “Six years after the creation of the Global Action Plan, it's now impossible to meet the targets set out in 2017 because progress has been too slow globally. Over 100 new plans would need to be created in two years to reach the target.”

In 2017, all 194 WHO member states unanimously agreed to address the growing risk and threat of dementia and adopted the [Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia 2017 - 2025](#) which aimed to improve the lives of those living with dementia as well as their carers while mitigating the impacts of the neurological condition on wider communities.

However, the number of NDPs implemented by WHO member states has remained unchanged since 2022. Unfortunately, even some G7 countries, such as France and England, two nations that formerly led the way with their development of NDPs have this year, regressed.

“We know hard work goes into creating and upholding NDPs, but people living with dementia worldwide are the ones who pay the price when governments turn a blind eye to their situation,” says Barbarino.

Over the last year, the United Kingdom has seen mixed results on the progress of their NDP's. England's NDP has lapsed despite dementia being the leading cause of death in England in 2022, with nearly 5,500 people dying of the disease in February alone.



Existing plans continue in Wales and Northern Ireland, and Scotland is scheduled to launch a new plan on 31 May.

### **Drug breakthroughs demand better preparedness from governments**

The recent publication of positive phase three results for amyloid-targeting drugs has shown promise in creating safe treatments that slow the trajectory of Alzheimer's disease.

Barbarino says these medical breakthroughs risk becoming void if the systems to roll out treatments are not ready.

"Time is of the essence with these emerging treatments. Early detection is the key, and healthcare systems are ill prepared" says Barbarino. "What good is having a treatment if people can't access it? Urgent planning is required to roll out these critical dementia therapies for people living with dementia."

As the population ages and more people are diagnosed, there is a pressing need for governments to adopt a plan that makes diagnosis and treatment accessible for all. Around 75 percent of those living with dementia are undiagnosed, and 85 percent of those living with dementia are not getting the care they need, meaning accessibility is already a major issue that needs to be addressed.

### **139 million people: Number of people with dementia increasing yet global National Dementia Plan progress is stagnant**

Dementia is the seventh leading cause of death in the world and is increasingly, the leading cause of death in some countries. As the population ages, the condition will only become harder to ignore.

Emily Ong, who was diagnosed with fronto temporal dementia at age 51, says that progress has been to slow worldwide as dementia prevalence continues to skyrocket.

"Member States cannot delay acting any longer. Dementia is a progressive degenerative condition, and every minute of delay is one minute too many," says Ong. "It is my hope that more Member States will wake up to the need to act."

The number of people living with dementia worldwide is forecast to rise to 139 million by 2050 according to the WHO. Yet, the number of National Dementia Plans implemented hasn't changed since 2022.

"After years of working in this field, our feeling is that some countries either don't value enough their senior citizens to invest in their wellbeing or are too scared of the costs of dementia care to put in place any plans," says Barbarino. "We must not let perfect be the enemy of good. We encourage all governments to start from somewhere. Even a small initiative, such as enabling carers to stay at work for longer, is better than nothing and at the end of the day it makes economic sense."

"Dementia is growing every day and the next six years must be used wisely by governments to shore up their response to dementia before it's too late," says Barbarino. "Time is running out to tackle dementia, one of the greatest public health threats of our time."

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### **About Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI)**

ADI is the international federation of 105 Alzheimer associations and federations around the world, in official relations with the World Health Organization. ADI's vision is prevention, care and inclusion today, and cure tomorrow. ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. ADI works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for persons with dementia and their care partners, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaign for policy change. For more information, please visit [www.alzint.org](http://www.alzint.org)