



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Thirteen Communities Receive Grants to Become “Dementia-Friendly”**

MINNEAPOLIS (July 14, 2014)— Organizations in 13 communities have been awarded a grant from ACT on Alzheimer’s to closely examine dementia readiness in their communities and work toward becoming dementia-friendly.

These ACTing on Alzheimer’s action communities are Paynesville, Becker, Cloquet, East Iron Range (cities of Aurora, Biwabik, and Hoyt Lakes), Mankato and North Mankato, Mille Lacs (Onamia and Isle School Districts), Redwood Falls, Rochester (downtown area), Sauk Rapids, and Stillwater area, in addition to Centro (reaching Twin Cities Latino populations), NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center/Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller (reaching North Minneapolis populations), and St. Paul African-American Faith Community. These new action communities join the [19 existing communities statewide](#).

The Alzheimer’s Association estimates there are 88,000 Minnesotans age 65 and older with the disease and many thousands more with other dementias. The grantees will join community engagement efforts across Minnesota to both prepare local communities for the growing impacts of Alzheimer’s and create supportive environments for everyone touched by the disease.

The innovative program will help communities build awareness of dementia and broader understanding of the everyday actions people can take to help those who need assistance. The initiative also will help communities develop appropriate strategies. Depending on the community, these may include tools for businesses to assist customers with dementia, help

for care partners and families and other support systems so that people with dementia can live independently with help from the community.

[ACT on Alzheimer's](#) is a volunteer-driven, statewide collaborative preparing Minnesota for the personal, social and budgetary impacts of Alzheimer's disease. Working with communities striving to become dementia-friendly is one of ACT's key strategies.

"As the population of Minnesota ages, it's important to build awareness and supportive environments for people with dementia and Alzheimer's," said Olivia Mastry, executive lead for ACT on Alzheimer's. "Some of the most exciting practices and possibilities will emerge from the work happening in geographic-based communities and communities of shared interests. Creating dementia-friendly communities means that care partners are supported and people with dementia can stay out of residential care settings longer. That helps everyone – families and taxpayers who pay for institutional care, employers who have workers trying to balance work and caregiving demands, and most importantly, the people living with Alzheimer's."

The grants are funded through Blue Plus (an HMO affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota), the Medica Foundation, and Greater Twin Cities United Way and administered through the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging. Learn more about the collaborative and the work at [www.actonalz.org](http://www.actonalz.org)

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More than 60 organizations are partners in ACT on Alzheimer's. ACT on Alzheimer's is a volunteer-driven collaboration dedicated to creating supportive communities for individuals and families touched by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. More information is available at [www.ACTonALZ.org](http://www.ACTonALZ.org)