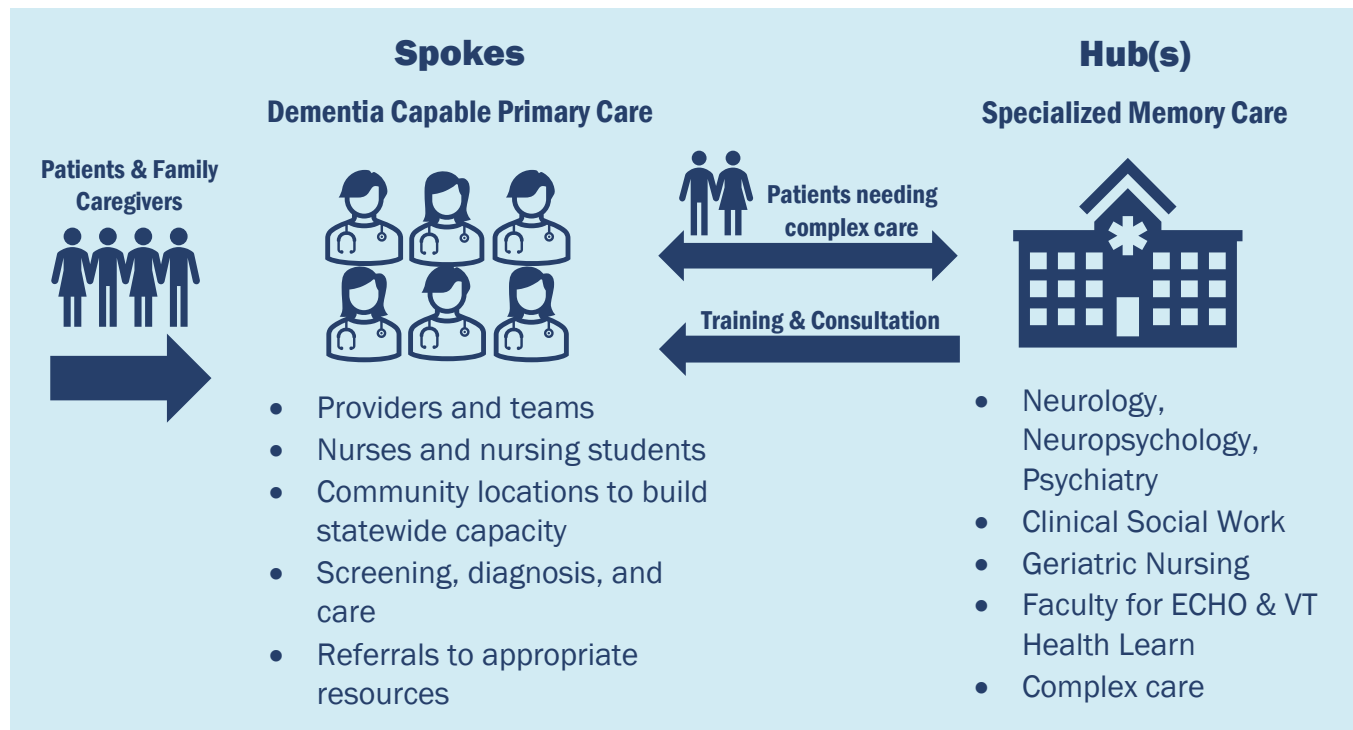


The Vermont **Hub and Spoke Initiative** is an effort to increase screening, diagnosis, and care for people in Vermont living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) and their caregivers by increasing capacity among primary care providers. The hub and spoke model is a health systems interprofessional approach that Vermont has leveraged effectively to address the [opioid crisis](#). The Hub and Spoke for ADRD Initiative involves multiple partners and seeks to measure progress over time.



## Who we are

The initiative is comprised of representatives from many groups and from diverse sectors, including:

- UVM Medical Center
- Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
- UVM Larner College of Medicine
- Vermont Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association
- UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Bi-State Primary Care Association
- Vermont Department of Health
- Vermont Health Care Association
- Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
- OneCare Vermont

## Key Activities



**Project ECHO:** A [program](#) for primary care teams that involves discussing evidence-based care, diagnosis, and management of individuals with ADRD. The program is offered at no cost through a collaboration between the VT Department of Health, VT Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the UVM Larner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care and AHEC program.



**Dementia Diagnosis Corner Consult:** A clinical expert provides [consultation sessions](#) regarding diagnosis and treatment of ADRD for primary care providers.



**VT Health Learn:** An online learning [course](#) about ADRD, “Dementia Education for Primary Care Providers and Teams in Vermont,” that can be accessed by health care providers and others on a statewide platform to learn more about providing care for ADRD patients. Continuing Medical Education Credits (CMEs) are available for participants.



**Caregiver Support:** Evidence based interventions to strengthen connections between primary care and caregiver supports include a range of activities such as CARERS (therapeutic group program), Tailored Care Assessments (to identify caregiver needs), Powerful Tools for Caregivers (to promote self-care for caregivers) as well as the Alzheimer's Association Hotline and associated education and support groups for caregivers.

## Initiative Goals and Evaluation Plan

The Hub and Spoke Initiative has partnered with [Professional Data Analysts \(PDA\)](#) to create an evaluation plan to understand the impact of this initiative. Evaluation results will be used to inform program improvements and validate evidence-based practices.

In the **short term**, we aim to:

- ✓ Increase the number of **providers** participating in activities and who...
  - are more aware of best clinical practices for Alzheimer's and other dementias, including practices related to screening, diagnosis, treatment, and referrals.
  - use diagnostic tools and codes to make more diagnoses in their offices and refer only complex cases to the Memory Program (or to a regional hub).
  - provide appropriate treatment and make appropriate referrals.
- ✓ Increase the number of **caregivers** participating in programs who use skills developed to manage emotions and better communicate with those experiencing dementia and other caregivers.

In the **long term**, we hope to see:

### Increased...

- ✓ number of calls to the VT Alzheimer's Association Help Line
- ✓ rate of diagnoses, controlling for population prevalence
- ✓ percentage of adults reporting cognitive decline who discussed their confusion or memory loss with a health care professional.
- ✓ capacity of programs to support caregivers

### Decreased...

- ✓ number of patients on the UVM Memory Program waiting list
- ✓ rate of ED visits for dementia related issues
- ✓ rate of hospitalization of patients awaiting nursing home placement due to dementia related issues

## Where we are now

The **current state** of dementia care in VT is captured, in part, by a few key data metrics:

- As of December 2021, there were nearly 500 potential patients on the waiting list for the UVM Memory Program.
- In 2016, 46% of people experiencing cognitive decline discussed their confusion or memory loss with a health care professional. The 2020 BRFSS included this subjective cognitive decline module again, which will provide updated data.
- In 2021, there were 236 calls to the Alzheimer's Association helpline.

A few **key accomplishments** of the initiative so far (as of February 2022):

- 106 participants in the first Project ECHO cohort
- 10 participants in Corner Consult
- 3 modules created for VT Health Learn, with 25 participants completing the modules
- 136 Caregivers participating in the CARERS program

Initial data show that **the work is making a difference**. Survey data collected from participants in the first three Project ECHO sessions, Sept – Nov 2021, showed that:

- 55% of participants said that the information presented will influence their prescribing
- 94% of participants said that the information presented will influence their practice/patients
- 96% of participants said that they learned something that will be useful in caring for their patients
- All evaluation items ranked on a 1-5 scale had an average score of 4 or above, indicating that participants agreed that the program was helpful, well-prepared, and had value.

## Where we are going

**The Hub and Spoke Initiative continues to grow.** Next steps include:

- Continuing to monitor and evaluate key activities to understand the impact of the work
- Continuing to build out VT Health Learn curriculum and the CARERS program
- Holding additional ECHO sessions for more provider cohorts
- Encouraging the development of regional leadership within the Hub and Spoke model

For more information about this work, or to get involved, contact:

**Rhonda Williams**, Chronic Disease Prevention Chief  
Vermont Department of Health, Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention  
[rhonda.williams@vermont.gov](mailto:rhonda.williams@vermont.gov)

**Angela Smith-Dieng**, Director, Adult Services Division  
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living  
[angela.smith-dieng@vermont.gov](mailto:angela.smith-dieng@vermont.gov)