

FACTSHEET

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Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act

What is the Older Americans Act?

- The Older Americans Act (OAA) was enacted in 1965 to expand and improve the services available to Americans aged 60 and older.
- The law focuses on delivering home and community-based programs and supports, including nutritional programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder abuse prevention, and caregiver support.
- OAA services are targeted at older individuals who have the greatest economic and social need, have low income, are members of low-income minority groups, reside in rural areas, have limited English proficiency, or are at risk of entering a nursing home.

The National Plan and the OAA

The Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care, and Services, which advises the Department of Health and Human Services on updating and implementing the National Alzheimer's Plan, has noted that those with younger-onset Alzheimer's face unique challenges in accessing care and support services.

In 2017, the Advisory Council made a series of recommendations to help address the needs of family caregivers. One of those recommendations was that Congress amend the Older Americans Act (OAA) to ensure that younger individuals living with dementia have access to OAA services.

Are individuals with Alzheimer's covered under the Older Americans Act?

- Many individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias receive vital assistance under the OAA — and many Alzheimer's caregivers receive respite care. These services help maintain an individual's independence. But, the OAA limited services to those aged 60 and older.
- According to the best available estimate, 200,000 individuals in the United States have younger-onset Alzheimer's (sometimes referred to as early-onset Alzheimer's). The average age of someone diagnosed with younger-onset is 49.
- Those with younger-onset Alzheimer's face unique challenges when it comes to family, work, and finances. Also, the stigma associated with younger-onset can have an impact on their quality of life.
- Additionally, programs and supports largely do not exist in the community or in the private sector because there are relatively few people with younger-onset.

How did the Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act solve this problem?

- In March 2020, Congress included key provisions of the Younger-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act in the reauthorization of the OAA.
- Individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias under the age of 60 are now able to receive nutritional services and caregiver respite support under the OAA.