

MEMORY KEEPERS MEDICAL DISCOVERY TEAM

ISSUE 07 | Winter 2025



Photos taken by Community Advisor Group Members

CERDAR

The Center for Community Engaged Rural Dementia and Alzheimer's Research

A deeper look into CERDAR and what we are working towards with rural communities. In this issue, you will meet more team members and get updates on our work, including preliminary findings from our research.

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DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

DR. KRISTEN JACKLIN *Executive Director*

This past summer and fall has been full of connection and engagement for the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team and CERDAR. As a team we have presented and hosted tables at numerous events throughout the year. Our recent Brain Train event in Thief River Falls was a wonderful success, bringing together community members and partners to share ideas and strengthen knowledge around brain health and dementia in communities. We are excited to be hosting more Brain Train events in north central and northeast Minnesota in the months ahead. I am grateful for the ongoing local partnerships, collaboration, and shared passion that drive our work in rural spaces.



We look forward to continuing to advance community-driven research and support healthy aging across our region. Thank you to our community partners, research participants, staff and you for your support of our mission!

Mapping Marginal Gains: A GIS Approach to Enhancing Trauma Service Accessibility Across Communities

Patrick Bright MA, Joshua T. Fergen PhD, Peter M. Nalin MD MBA

Marginal gains analysis, a geographic information system (GIS)-based approach, can be used to assess how trauma center locations relate to the demographics they serve. Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and state health department trauma center lists, this method examines the population characteristics around each trauma center and applies GIS tools to examine capacity, accessibility, and gaps in trauma care. This approach helps healthcare leaders and policymakers make more informed decisions about where trauma centers are needed, how well current centers serve their communities, and where inequities in access persist. It also highlights demographic differences between populations with adequate trauma care and those without. This approach can be used to tailor interventions and programmings based on existing health conditions around each trauma center.

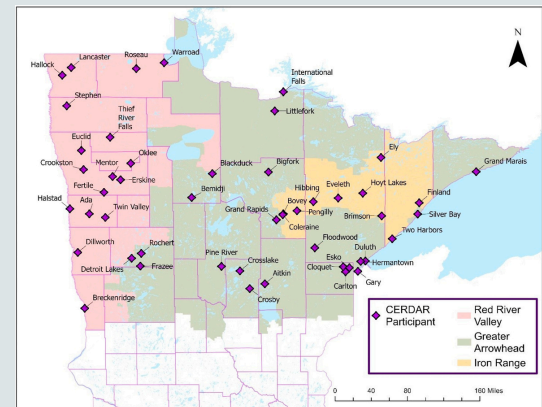
Published: *Physician Leadership Journal* - Volume 12, Issue 3 - May 2025

<https://www.physicianleaders.org/articles/doi/10.55834/plj.6592137560>

Building a Regional Community-Based Participatory Research Model for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias for Rural Communities

Kristen Jacklin PhD, Joshua T. Fergen PhD, Patricia D Soderlund PhD, Kirsten Cruikshank MSW LGSW, Kelsie Larson MPH, RDN, Dereck Salisbury PhD, Wayne Warry PhD

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is effective for working with under represented rural populations and can be adapted to different social, cultural, and geographic contexts. Because rural communities vary widely, research also needs to account for regional differences. To address this, the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team (MK-MDT) developed a regional CBPR model that connects rural communities across northern Minnesota and is supported by partnerships with local organizations, healthcare providers, and academic teams. In this paper, we describe the model and share three case studies. Although created in the upper Midwest, the MK-MDT model can be adapted to other rural regions working together to improve Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia research and care.



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<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/16094069251346866>

TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

Each issue will highlight different members of the CERDAR team.



Wyatt Cheney, MS - Qualitative Data Analyst

Wyatt joined Memory Keepers as a qualitative data analyst in June 2024. Prior to working with the MDT, he received his MS in Geography and Geospatial Sciences from Kansas State University. His thesis research utilized a mixed methods approach to identify barriers and facilitators to prescribed burning across Kansas among collectives of rural and peri-urban landowners. In his role with the MDT, Wyatt supports the CERDAR and the American Indigenous Cognitive Assessment (AMICA) projects, along with fulfilling some GIS needs as they arise. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking, reading sci-fi, and playing with his cat.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team would not be where we are without the continued support from our local area partners

Northwoods Partners - Ely, MN

Since its beginning in 2001, Northwoods Partners (NP) has evaluated and supported clients and their caregivers to help them to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. In 2004, a program was started to provide transportation for older adults to medical appointments and for errands. In 2008, NP developed an exercise program that enhances the quality of life for older adults and helps reduce falls.



NP was recruited in 2010 to participate in a New York University research program to educate and enable patients with Alzheimer's disease to remain living longer at home. In 2012 the Northwoods Memory Care program was created in response to a growing community need. In 2014, NP began partnering with other community health care providers to create more effective and efficient care for families dealing with types of dementia or memory loss.

MISSION:

Provide resources that promote independence and healthy aging

VISION:

A community where people are able to age with dignity

VALUES:

Compassion, Relationships, Dignity, Respect, Independence, Volunteerism

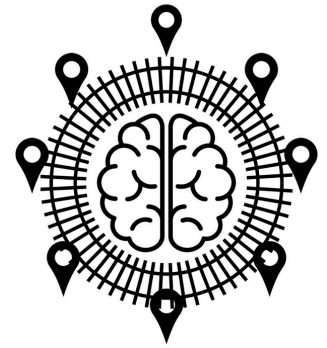
What is a Brain Train?

A Brain Train event involves creating a welcoming event space with interactive stations staffed by researchers, local organizations, and healthcare professionals all invested in improving community wellbeing and knowledge related to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

These events are organized in collaboration with, and feature, local agencies and service providers (e.g., Health Services, Legal Services, Elder Services).

GOALS

- Increase knowledge about dementia, risk factors, and prevention
- Address dementia progression from biomedical and community perspectives
- Share with community members the available resources for those living with memory loss, their caregivers, and family members
- Encourage socialization through story sharing and activities



THIEF RIVER FALLS BRAIN TRAIN 2025

The Brain Train in Thief River Falls on September 23rd, 2025, was a success that brought together 20 vendors and over 30 attendees for a day of learning and community engagement! Each booth offered valuable information and resources related to wellness, healthy aging, and community connection. We are deeply grateful to all who participated and contributed to making this event meaningful! We look forward to building on this event to plan more Brain Trains in the future.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Previous Events

- CERDAR CAG Meetings
- Rural Research Advisory Group Meeting
- Dementia Friendly Representatives
- Northland Senior Care Network Meetings
- Alzheimer's Awareness Advisory Group Meetings
- Alzheimer's Day at the Capitol
- U of M Public Engagement Conference
- Minnesota Gerontological Society Conference and Webinar Presentation
- Eveleth Senior Expo
- Detroit Lakes Senior Expo
- Ely Healthy Aging Expo
- Rural Health Conference
- Brain Health Info Session- Two Harbors Library
- Dementia Friends Info-Session in Chisholm
- Ely Farmer's Market Outreach
- St Louis County Health & Human Resources Conference
- ForeverWell-YMCA Older Adults Picnic in Grand Rapids
- Grand Marais Brain Health Fair
- Statewide Rural Community Health Workers Conference
- Thief River Falls Round Table
- Grand Rapids Health Fair
- MN Healthy Brain Partnership Meeting
- Alzheimer's Disease - What is it and What can be done? Dr. Joe Gaugler
- Age Well & Age Strong Aikin County Community Conference & Resource Faira
- Walk to End Alzheimer's Twin Ports
- Walk Around the Block for Alzheimer's
- Age Friendly Northwest and Northeast Regional Exchange
- MN Leadership Council on Aging Summit

Looking forward to many more events in 2026!

2025 Review: Watch, Listen, Taste, Read:

Watch: The PBS series - "Aging in America: Survive or Thrive, narrated by Martin Sheen, is a one-hour documentary that celebrates the promise of increased longevity while addressing crucial and unprecedented public policy challenges. Using Dr. Robert Butler's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Why Survive?* as a guide, the film explores critical topics such as ageism, healthcare, economic insecurity, and Alzheimer's disease." - *PBS North, Aging in America Series, April 2025*

Listen: MPR Segment - "Living with and reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia- MPR News host Angela Davis and her guests talk about the latest research and how to support people who live with dementia and their caregiver." - *MPR News, June 2025*

Taste: High protein foods help maintain muscle mass and cognitive function and fiber is important for gut health. Prioritizing these nutrients may help with continued healthy brain function. This lentil salad is packed with fiber and protein while being lower in sodium!

YOUR RESEARCH TEAM

Memory Keepers Medical Discovery

Team Investigators:

- Kristen Jacklin, PhD
- Emily Onello, MD
- Wayne Warry, PhD

UMN Medical School, Duluth Campus:

- Catherine McCarty, PhD, MPH
- Sandra Stover, MD
- Amy Greminger, MD

UMN School of Public Health:

- Carrie Henning-Smith, PhD, MPH, MSW
- Joseph E. Gaugler, PhD

UMN School of Nursing:

- Dereck Salisbury, PhD

Collaborators:

- Abigail Johnson, PhD, RDN- *Guest Scholar*
- Stephen Waring, DVM, PhD, FACE- *Principal Scientist, Essentia Institute of Rural Health*

Rural Advisor in Residence:

- Shawn McMahon, MD

Memory Keepers Medical

Discovery Team Staff:

- Melissa Blind, PhD
- Patrick Bright, MA
- Josyaah Budreau, MA
- Wyatt Cheney, MS
- Kirsten Cruikshank, MSW, LGSW
- Melinda Dertinger, MA
- Beth Fait, PhD, MEd, MHA
- Josh Fergen, PhD
- Kelsie Larson, MPH, RDN
- Brooke Metz, MA, MS
- Maggie Noun, MSW, LGSW
- Amy Otto, PhD
- Lysie Radovich, PhD
- Sung Han Rhew, PhD
- Mitchell Rigert, MA
- Natalya Walker-Muller, BA

Community Advisory Group

Northwest:

- Karen Bedeau- *Dementia Outreach Advocate, Northwoods Caregivers*
- Lora Bertelsen, PhD, LP- *Counseling Psychologist*
- Val Mattison- *Program Developer, Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging (AAA)*
- Jody Peterson- *Informal supporter for caregivers*
- Rita Poulton- *Former Caregiver and Business Manager*

Northeast

- Kelly Campbell- *Community Health Coordinator, Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital*
- Marcia Grahek- *Retired RN Supervisor, community volunteer*
- Gina Marsalla, BS- *Grants Manage, Arrowhead AAA*
- Jenna Pogorels, MSW, LICSW- *Senior Program Manager, Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter, Alzheimer's Association*
- David Popilek- *Caregiver and Performer*

Rural Research Advisory Group

- Terry J. Hill, MPA- *Executive Director, Rural Health Innovations, Senior Advisor for Rural Health Leadership and Policy, National Rural Health Resource Center, Duluth*
- Kristi Kane- *Executive Director, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)*
- Kasey Kapella, MD- *Gerontologist, Fairview Virginia Clinic*
- Megan O'Connell, PhD- *Department of Psychology Rural Dementia Action Research (RADAR) Centre, Rural and Remote Memory Clinic, University of Saskatchewan College of Arts and Science*
- Heather Pender- *Aging Program Director, Dancing Sky AAA*



CERDAR is made possible and continues to be supported by the Memory Keepers Medical Discovery Team


Join the CERDAR Community for newsletters and to participate in our research!


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CONTACT US

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