Introduction to the National Dementia Workforce Study video transcript, Sept. 1, 2026

Welcome to our introduction to the National Dementia Workforce Study, or NDWS.

In this video, we'll review why NDWS exists, and what it is, who's on the project team, cover a high-level overview of the NDWS surveys, learn a little about what's coming, and how to find more information on our website.

Background

Dementia already affects millions of Americans and their family members, and their care needs are growing quickly.

Current estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention project that the number of people with dementia will nearly double between 2020 and 2060, growing to nearly 14 million.

Care for these individuals spans multiple settings, and the workforce in those settings shapes day-to-day care.

Vision

The National Dementia Workforce Study, or NDWS, is led by a multi-disciplinary team funded by a cooperative agreement with the National Institute on Aging. It seeks to help researchers fill a key gap. We still don't understand, at a national level, how dementia care is supplied, how provider and institutional decisions lead to differences in the care people receive, and how that influences the outcomes of that care.

But it is important to note that the goal of the project is not for the study team to answer these questions. Rather, the purpose is to build data resources and make them available, free of cost, to other researchers so they can answer important questions with these data.

Ultimately, we hope that learning more about this workforce can help identify factors that lead to better care and outcomes for both the people with dementia and the workforce caring for them, generating evidence that can inform health care delivery. This, in turn, advances the NIA's AD+ADRD Research Implementation Milestone 13.J on the dementia care workforce.

Consortium and Partners

NDWS is interdisciplinary, with a team of investigators that spans the country and includes multiple clinical specialties, labor economics, survey methods, observational data linkage, and bioethics. Survey data collection is being conducted by RTI and DLH, which were selected at the beginning of the project through a competitive bid process.

NDWS: Family of Surveys

The core of NDWS is a coordinated family of surveys. The Community Clinician Survey focuses on physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants from the specialties most likely to diagnose or manage dementia.

Then we have surveys focused on important settings of care: nursing homes, assisted living communities, and the home setting.

For participating organizations in the initial survey years, we have focused on licensed nurses and direct care workers. Of course, other clinicians are also important, such as occupational therapists, social workers, or cardiologists, to name a few. But this is the foundation that we are beginning from.

Sample and Eligibility (Who's In-Scope, CC Survey)

For the Community Clinician Survey, we focused on physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants in specialties most likely to diagnose or manage dementia, specifically, primary care, psychiatry, and neurology.

We built our survey sample from Medicare data in three steps. First, we identified beneficiaries with a dementia diagnosis in the most recent year of Medicare data, using both fee-for-service and Medicare Advantage.

Second, we identified clinicians connected to those beneficiaries, either through billed encounters or through prescribing. We specifically included prescribing clinicians to better capture nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

Third, we stratified the frame to support balanced sampling by clinician type, practice setting, dementia panel size, rurality, and the proportion of low-income patients on their panel.

Sample and Eligibility (Who's In-Scope, Org Surveys)

For nursing homes, the frame is straightforward: all facilities in the U.S. that are certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Since there is no equivalent federal certification for assisted living communities, we built the frame from state licensing lists.
For Wave 1, our sample for the Home Care Survey was drawn from CMS-certified home health agencies. Wave 2 was expanded to include state-based lists of home care agencies.

Within organizations, rather than relying on volunteers or staff picked by the organization, we request a roster of staff, and then randomly sample staff from it for our survey. This helps minimize selection bias.

Instruments and Key Content Areas

We developed seven baseline questionnaires. In addition to the Community Clinician Survey, for the setting-based surveys such as the Nursing Home Survey there is an administrator survey for the participating organization and then a staff survey for the sampled employees.

Overall, the content domains across all surveys are what you might expect. We capture demographics, education, training and experience, employment and work structure, dimension knowledge and attitudes, working conditions, organizational practices, and outcomes such as burnout and intent to stay.

This slide presents a high-level overview of the planned waves of data collection across the five-year project. Some additional details to note here: first, in the middle of the slide, you'll notice some arrows pointing at orange ovals. These ovals mark the start of a qualitative data collection effort that begins in 2026, where a subset of new Wave 3 survey respondents across all surveys will be selected for semi-structured qualitative interviews.

Second, there are brackets on the right of the slide. These highlight that, by Wave 5, we will have accumulated multiple years of longitudinal staff follow-up surveys.

These will offer a unique opportunity to track staff workforce entrances and exits, and provide new insights on worker experiences over time.

Explore NDWS Website

Before we close, let's look at a few places you might want to visit on our website at ndws.org. Start at the top navigation bar, under Surveys and Data. That's where you'll find two key things: Survey Questionnaires, where you can view the actual instruments by wave, and How to Access Data, which explains the difference between the Public Use Files and the Restricted Use Files accessible through LINKAGE or the MiCDA Enclave.

Please watch our next webinar for more information on data access.

Finally, if you want updates, use the Join Email List button. This is the best way to hear about new releases, documentation updates, and pilot calls.

Acknowledgement

Thank you for watching this video. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information, and see our special collection in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

This video was produced by Rona Hu, Esther Friedman, Martha Pennington, and Donovan Maust, with funding from the National Institute on Aging.

Comments and questions may be sent to info@ndws.org. Thanks for listening, and for your interest.