



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Reeves County Hospital District Raises Local Awareness of Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease**

*June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month.*

PECOS, Texas (June 13, 2022) – More than 6 million Americans live with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 13 million. June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, and Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) is participating in this nationwide campaign to bring awareness to Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

"As we age, many individuals may experience some memory loss," explains Dr. Steven Serrano, at Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, a service of RCHD. "Dementia and Alzheimer's disease is certainly something that should not be taken lightly as its implications can have a devastating effect on one's ability to function in life."

There are many possible causes of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Abnormal brain changes cause disorders grouped under the general term "dementia". These changes trigger a decline in thinking skills, also known as cognitive abilities, severe enough to impair daily life and independent function. They also affect behavior, feelings, and relationships.

Brain changes that cause dementia are sometimes temporary; however, they are most often permanent and worsen over time, leading to disabilities and a shortened life span. Survival varies widely based on the cause of dementia, age at diagnosis, and coexisting health conditions.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of dementia cases. This disease is not a normal part of aging. It is a progressive brain disease with no cure. Researchers continue to pave the way for future treatments by uncovering new insights into the biology of the disease.

Rural areas, such as Texas, are experiencing a disproportionate burden of Alzheimer's disease mortality due to lack of primary care, not receiving a timely diagnosis and the rising proportion of older Americans living in rural areas.

More concerning, it is estimated that 59.1 percent of Texans with memory problems have not talked to their health care provider. Additionally, 26.8 percent of Texans with memory problems live alone, and 82.9 percent have at least one other chronic condition.

**MORE**

**Reeves County Hospital District**

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**Reeves County Hospital District Raises Local Awareness of Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease**  
**Page 2**

“We all must become comfortable talking with our medical providers about physical and mental health-related conditions, including the possibility of one experiencing memory loss,” Dr. Serrano adds. “We see how often individuals in rural communities are affected by dementia, and we hope we can curb the undiagnosed and untreated trends here in Reeves County.”

Signs of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease are more than simple lapses in memory. Individuals with Alzheimer’s disease generally experience memory loss and difficulties communicating, learning, thinking, and reasoning.

As the disease progresses, individuals may often experience changes in their personality and behavior, such as anxiety, suspicion or agitation, and delusions or hallucinations.

While there is no single diagnostic test that can determine whether a person has Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, there are many diagnostic tools and criteria, or physicians properly make a diagnosis. This is generally part of a greater diagnostic process, which may include reviewing one’s medical history, mental status and mood testing, physical and neurological exam, lab tests, and brain imaging.

There is no cure for dementia, but there are many options to treat symptoms and possibly slow the progression of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

For more information about screening for dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, talk with your medical provider or call the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic at 432-447-0565.

**About Reeves County Hospital District**

Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) provides healthcare services for people in Reeves County and neighboring communities in West Texas. Founded in 1954, RCHD, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers a wide variety of medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic radiology, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RCHD also operates American Home Health and Hospice and the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, which offers family care, immunizations, and other medical services. For more information, please visit [www.reevescountyhospital.com](http://www.reevescountyhospital.com).

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