

A SAFE AND DIGNIFIED LIFE WITH DEMENTIA

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON DEMENTIA 2025

January 2017



INTRODUCTION

We can do much better

In Denmark, we have come a long way in improving our effort in the field of dementia and many employees and volunteers are everyday making a great and qualified effort to secure a good and safe life for people with dementia and their relatives. However, we can do even better. The task ahead is to ensure that all municipalities and regions reach the same high level. Today there are more than 35,000 Danes over 65 years living with dementia. We know that many more are affected by dementia and have not yet received a diagnosis. It is estimated that the total number is close to 80,000 people (7.28 %). As we get older and live longer, more people are expected to be affected by dementia in the years to come.

Dementia is often associated with older people, but dementia affects adults of all ages. When talking about dementia, the term 'younger' usually covers people below 65 years of age. It is estimated that around 2,800 Danes (0.06 %) below 65 are diagnosed with dementia.

If we are going to be at the forefront of the challenges arising from more people affected by dementia and the special needs of younger people with dementia, we must set a clear direction and priorities for future joint efforts across the health and elderly care sectors. In short, we need to make ambitious and long-term targets for efforts on dementia from now and until 2025. Targets we can compare future efforts to and targets that can contribute to giving the field of dementia the significant boost, we all want to see.

The core values of the national action plan for dementia

Throughout Denmark, people with dementia and their relatives must receive services of high professional quality based on dignity, compassion and respect for the personal preferences, needs and resources of each individual and for the life lived by the human behind the disease.

People with dementia should be able to live a secure and dignified life throughout all stages of the disease, regardless of whether they still live at home or in an elderly care centre; and when contacting the health care system people with dementia and their relatives must be treated with dignity.

People with dementia must be met with an individual and holistic approach in treatment, nursing and care. Life is still to be enjoyable and the efforts across the health and elderly care sectors must contribute to a safe and good everyday life with meaningful activities and good experiences.

The needs that arise when getting a disease such as dementia depends on whether you get sick in the middle of your life or in later years, and the efforts must be adapted accordingly.

These values are the core values of the national action plan for dementia 2025. The values must constitute the framework for all the initiatives lined out in the action plan and for the general efforts towards people with dementia and their relatives. The political parties that agreed to this action plan emphasise that these values must be the top indicators for the specific implementation of the action plan.

Values of the national action plan on dementia 2025

The efforts toward people with dementia and their relatives are founded on the following values:

- Dignity
- Safety
- Influence on your own life
- Respect for diversity and the lived life
- An individual and holistic approach in treatment, nursing and care based on the individual human being behind the disease
- Meaningful activities and good experiences in everyday life

The action plan on dementia contains specific initiatives across the health and elderly care sectors to benefit citizens with dementia and their relatives and the action plan also sets the goal and direction for efforts towards dementia until 2025 through three national goals which will significantly boost future dementia efforts.



National goals for the dementia efforts 2025

Three national goals for the dementia efforts towards 2025 have been set in order to contribute to a significant boost of the field of dementia and to diminish the geographical inequality between municipalities and regions.

All 98 municipalities in Denmark should be dementia friendly

All Danish municipalities are encouraged to become dementia friendly municipalities. Several are already well on their way, while other municipalities still have a way to go. One part of being dementia friendly consists of having a local dementia strategy that outlines the municipal efforts in this field for the benefit of citizens, relatives, professional actors and local decision makers and it is recommended that this strategy is worked out through involving people with dementia and their relatives. Among other things, a strategy on dementia can include policies for efforts toward relatives (i.e. relief help, counselling, and more), policies for the efforts concerning treatment and care of people with dementia as well as considerations on the proper physical surroundings such as dementia friendly housing facilities. It is also important to ensure that information on the municipal efforts on dementia is easy accessible for people affected by dementia and their relatives and that counselling assistance is easily located. Inspiration can be found in the concept for the dementia friendly municipalities that has been elaborated by Demensalliancen (The Dementia Alliance, an NGO coalition).

More people with dementia must be detected and 80 percent must have a specific diagnosis

More than 35,000 people over 65 years have received a dementia related diagnosis – either through examination at a hospital or by receiving a diagnosis and prescription on dementia related medicine from their general practitioner. However, we know that the actual number is much higher. Far too many people never receive a proper examination, so they never receive the care, treatment and support that can ensure their life quality and comfort in everyday life. A timely and accurate diagnosis is crucial in order to enable the municipalities and regions to provide an appropriate treatment and a qualified care for people with dementia. This is especially the case for the group of younger people affected by dementia, who are often even more difficult to diagnose. It is of utmost importance that the quality of the examination is strengthened and that 80 percent of people diagnosed with dementia receive a specific diagnosis.

Improving care and treatment reduce consumption of anti-psychotic medicines amongst people with dementia with 50 percent before 2025

People with dementia must, of course, be given the medicines they need, but the current consumption of anti-psychotic medicines among people with dementia is too high. The professional recommendations in this field are clear – people with dementia should in principle not be treated with anti-psychotic medicine. Even so, we know that 20 percent of people with dementia receives anti-psychotic medicines. During the last ten years, we have seen a decline in consumption, but this is far from enough. To reduce consumption it is necessary to strengthen the quality of treatment and care and to focus on creating the proper physical surroundings for people with dementia – as well as securing a high level of qualifications among the skilled professionals in the field of dementia.



Drawing up the national action plan for dementia

The government and other political parties agreed to allocate DKK 470,000 million of the special social pools fund for 2016-2019 to the implementation of specific initiatives based on a new national action plan for dementia 2025.

The national action plan for dementia was developed through a broad and inclusive process in which relevant actors in the field, citizens with dementia, their relatives and experts and health professionals have been involved and expressed their ideas and priorities. Five local dialogue meetings have been held in five of the first dementia friendly municipalities in Denmark. A number of visits to care homes, hospitals, counselling and contact centres and other relevant NGO's have taken place and inspiration have been sought in both England, Sweden and Norway. Furthermore, an advisory group of representatives from relevant organisations and stakeholders was established to oversee the process.

Including the recommendations from a widely composed reference group, The Danish Health Authority has elaborated a professional paper as contribution to the national action plan on dementia, which was handed over to the Ministry of Health in June 2016. This professional paper represents a solid contribution to the joint efforts of turning Denmark into a dementia friendly country, where citizens with dementia and their relatives can lead a dignified and safe life based on their present and individual needs, no matter where they are in the course of their illness.

In the autumn of 2016, a draft of the national plan on dementia was subjected to a public hearing among all relevant actors in order to include their views. The replies from this hearing process showed a wide and positive support for the inclusive process and for the national goals, the five focus areas and the initiatives mentioned below.

Based on this process the government and the political parties agreed on Denmark's new national action plan on dementia 2025 and the allocation of DKK 470 million to specific initiatives in the area of dementia.

Government initiatives in the area of dementia

The government and the political parties in the special social pools fund agreement have allocated DKK 470 million to be distributed to 5 focus areas which are divided into 23 specific initiatives.

1

Early detection and better quality in examination and in treatment

Initiative 1: Tools to detect dementia earlier

DKK 1.6 million is allocated to elaborate a tool – based on already existing tools - that can help to detect dementia at an earlier stage. The tool must be usable in both primary and secondary health care by e.g. prevention workers, home nurses and other health personnel that see people in their home. The tool must help to identify cases of dementia in the early stages of the illness and help people to move on.

Initiative 2: General practice must focus on signs of dementia

Aiming to strengthen the early detection of dementia in general practice, The Danish Society for General Medicine is asked to update the clinical guidelines on dementia in order to incorporate the newest knowledge.

Initiative 3: Fewer, interdisciplinary units for detection and treatment

The regions must establish interdisciplinary detection and treatment units in order to ensure quality in the detection and treatment of people with dementia. DKK 145 million is allocated to reorganising and establishing outpatient surveillance and treatment and to boost the capacity to detect dementia during the period of 2017-2019. The reorganisation must follow the guidelines recommended by the Danish Health Authorities. Specifying how detection of dementia can be concentrated on a smaller number of interdisciplinary detection and treatment units that are geographically dispersed.

Initiative 4: New national clinical guidelines for the area of dementia

DKK 3 million is allocated to new national clinical guidelines within selected areas of treatment of people with dementia. The subject for clinical guidelines can include treatment of one or more different forms of dementias, or selected conditions of people with dementia, such as behavioural disorder, depression, BPSD and including evaluation of the use of medicines such as e.g. anti-psychotic medicines.

Initiative 5: Reduction in the consumption of anti-psychotic medicines among people with dementia

A monitoring process of the consumption of antipsychotic medicines is initiated and the figures will be published on a yearly basis in order to be able to compare among age groups and across the country. Also, DKK 6.1 million is allocated to increase focus on GP's prescription of anti-psychotic medicines through the screening of medicine and to enhance knowledge and information on correct medication

Initiative 6: National recommendations of optimal cross-sectorial and interdisciplinary courses

DKK 2 million is allocated to evaluate the already existing course programmes and co-operation agreements concerning dementia. Based on this evaluation, The Danish Health Authority elaborates professional recommendations for cross-sectorial courses for people with dementia for future use.

2

Improved quality of care, nursing and rehabilitation

Initiative 7: Knowledge based manuals with scientific recommendations for professional social and healthcare workers in the field of dementia

DKK 2.5 million is allocated to elaborate knowledge based manuals to strengthen the everyday practise of health professionals. The manuals focus on the professional areas in which the healthcare personnel have requested more knowledge. The aim is to increase the quality of the efforts in general, but also to ensure a common and coherent approach.

Initiative 8: More and better possibilities for training and physical activities

DKK 32 million is allocated to support the municipalities in implementing training schemes and packages developed at national level and distributed to the municipalities. The training packages will ensure uniformity in the municipal rehabilitation programs and will guarantee that the training methods and activity facilities are based on the newest knowledge on which type of training have the most positive effect on the well-being and life quality of people with dementia.

Initiative 9: General screening of regulations concerning use of force

DKK 0.5 million is allocated to carry out a screening, in cooperation with the Ministry for Children and Social Affairs, of the current regulations in the Danish Service Act on the use of force. The screening will evaluate the need and possibilities for making the rules on the use of force more understandable and easier to handle for both administrative staff and healthcare personnel. The screening will also evaluate a possible change of the rules in relation to applying new security technologies for patients in care centres and in highly specialised care centres. Finally, the screening will evaluate national guidelines for the use of alarm and tracking systems.

Initiative 10: Better methods for treatment of permanently incompetent patients

Several citizens with a permanently reduced mental capacity, e.g. citizens with severe dementia, do not receive the somatic treatment they need to maintain good health because they refuse to receive treatment for e.g. sores and infections. The government and the political parties behind this action plan agree to continue the work on a new legislation that can strengthen the care for this group of citizens, so treatment will be possible despite their refusal. The parties also agreed to finance this initiative from the special social pools fund for 2018-2021.

3

Support and guidance for the relatives of people with dementia

Initiative 11: Development and distribution of a national toolbox of courses for patients and relatives

DKK 2.5 million is allocated to developing a national toolbox of courses for patients and relatives, which contains a guide to planning and carrying out the courses. The courses in the toolbox should function as a tool for both people with dementia and their relatives so they can prepare themselves to handle the disease and the challenges it brings.

Initiative 12: Increase in the number of places offered in relief day care centres and more support for younger people with dementia

DKK 39 million is allocated to strengthen the quality and flexibility of day care centres and relief care offers, as well as relief care offers at home. The initiative also focuses on the specific problems faced by relatives to younger people with dementia. Moreover, the initiative underlines the obligation of the municipalities to handle the necessary transport of people with dementia to enable them to participate in the day care offers.

Initiative 13: Counselling- and activity centres for people with dementia and their relatives, including younger people with dementia

DKK 37.5 million is allocated to establish counselling- and activity centres for people with dementia and their relatives. The centres should focus on user involvement and will offer supportive talks, counselling, social and physical activities and the possibilities of being together with fellow people. The centres must also offer courses for people with dementia and their relatives with a focus on welfare technology. Furthermore, focus on younger people with dementia is an important task for the centres as it is difficult for the individual municipality to care for this group. A common concept for the counselling- and activity centres will be established and the municipalities and NGO's can apply for funds to establish a centre. The allocation of funds and resources is prioritised with a view to geographical dispersion of the centres.

4

Dementia friendly communities and housing

Initiative 14: Local and national activities should support a dementia friendly community

DKK 25 million is allocated to contribute to supporting the development of dementia friendly local communities by establishing local or national partnerships, to information campaigns firmly anchored in local communities and to specific projects where volunteers create activities for people with dementia and their relatives. The allocation of funds and resources is prioritised with a view to geographical dispersion.

Initiative 15: 98 dementia friendly municipalities

All municipalities are encouraged to become dementia friendly. Inspiration can be found in the concept for dementia friendly municipalities elaborated by Demensalliancen (The Dementia Alliance, an NGO)

Initiative 16: Increasing the number of dementia friendly housing and more dementia friendly surroundings

DKK 13 million is allocated to support the municipalities in making assisted living facilities more dementia friendly through a number of specific efforts that have an effect on the wellbeing and safety for people with dementia. The initiative should be seen in connection with previously allocated funds to reconstruction and decor of assisted living facilities.

Initiative 17: A national labelling system for housing that is suitable for people with dementia

DKK 2.5 million is allocated to a national labelling system that includes both existing and newly constructed assisted living facilities based on professional knowledge on dementia friendly decor.

Initiative 18: Testing dementia friendly hospitals

DKK 6 million is allocated to initiating a pilot project on dementia friendly hospital decor in selected regions and hospitals. The aim is to create more knowledge about dementia friendly decor in hospitals and its effect on citizens and personnel.

5

Increasing knowledge and professional skills

Initiative 19: A new national research strategy for dementia and new research

In order to strengthen research efforts, DKK 6.7 million is allocated to elaborate a new research strategy which will set the direction for research in this area towards 2025 and to educate business ph. d.'s who will also carry out research in the field of dementia.

Initiative 20: Making the National Knowledge Centre for Dementia permanent

The funding of the National Knowledge Centre for Dementia was made permanent in the 2017 agreement on the special social pool fund in order to promote the important role of the knowledge centre and its activities in the field of dementia. This includes the future development and implementation of the e-learning courses, ABC Dementia and the support of future research on dementia and increasing the level of knowledge in municipalities and regions.

Initiative 21: Better data in the field of dementia

DKK 1 million is allocated to further development of the Danish Clinical Quality Database for Dementia (Dansk Klinisk Kvalitetsdatabase for Demens) in order to construct a cross-sectorial quality data base, including municipal data, that can be used to monitor on relevant indicators throughout the entire course of dementia.

Initiative 22: Boosting practise-oriented skills in municipalities and regions

DKK 145 million is allocated to boosting the skills of relevant employees and leaders, relevant trade groups within care and nursing, and relevant trade groups in hospitals. The purpose is to support professional skills on municipal and regional level and to ensure a development of the professional skills in the area of dementia with a focus on applying and anchoring knowledge on practise level. Emphasis is partly on practise-oriented learning on all levels of care and nursing efforts and partly on formal qualifying courses in a continuing education.

Initiative 23: An annual dementia award

The annual dementia award will be given to an employee that has made a specific effort in the field of dementia. The award will contribute to increase the attention regarding dementia as well as recognising a skilled employee who has made a special work effort in order to ensure that people with dementia can have a dignified life. DKK 0.3 million is allocated to the award.

