

Rochester Native Leads Groundbreaking Research on Dementia Care in Home Health Settings



Neil Aquino, June 12, 2025

As dementia rates rise nationally and locally, home health care plays an increasingly critical role in helping older adults live safely at home.

Two national studies led by Julia Burgdorf, PhD, a Rochester native and research scientist with the Center for Home Care Policy & Research at VNS Health, aim to strengthen awareness of dementia care options for people living with dementia and their family caregivers. In one study, Dr. Burgdorf found that 69% of home health records for patients with dementia did not include their dementia diagnosis.

This lack of documentation was linked to higher hospitalization rates and increased costs, highlighting the need for better dementia recognition and documentation practices.

In her other study, using 2018 national Medicare data, Dr. Burgdorf revealed that only 11% of home health patients received social worker support, and most received only one visit. Access was lower for those receiving care from for-profit or rural home health agencies.

Dr. Burgdorf's work highlights the essential role of home care in supporting people with dementia and their family caregivers, and points to simple solutions for closing these care gaps.

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