



## MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Spring is a season of renewal and fresh starts. It's the perfect opportunity to focus on healthy habits that support brain health. We're excited to share the latest news, new research opportunities, and upcoming community events. Thank you for being part of a growing statewide community committed to healthier brains and brighter futures. We hope this newsletter inspires you to take one small step this season to support your brain health.

Warmly,  
Drs. Goldie Byrd and Kathleen Welsh-Bohmer

## RECENT NEWS IN BRAIN HEALTH

### [HOW STAYING ACTIVE SUPPORTS A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE](#)

Engaging in regular physical activity is one of the best ways to help us live longer and keep our brains healthy. Being active has been linked to a lower risk of cancer, depression, dementia, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. The national guidelines recommend aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week, plus muscle-strengthening exercises two days a week.

The great news is that even a little exercise can start bringing health benefits. Plus, being social while exercising matters, too! Fun, mentally stimulating, social activities can help keep the brain active. Whether you play tennis, join a dance class, walk with a friend, or lift weights, it is important to move more, stay connected, and choose activities you enjoy. Remember, every small step today can lead to a healthier brain and a longer, happier life tomorrow. To read more, visit [this link](#).



## [PRACTICAL STEPS TO KEEP PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA SAFE](#)

When someone living with dementia wanders without our knowledge, it can be dangerous and scary. Unfortunately, for caregivers and family members with dementia, this can be a common occurrence.

A recent [NPR article](#) explains that wandering often occurs when a person feels confused, anxious, overwhelmed, or when trying to meet a basic need (like finding the bathroom or “going home” to a place that feels familiar).

Experts encourage families to plan ahead for the possibility of wandering by:

- Keeping recent photos of your loved one readily available (smartphones are a great way to keep photos current).
- Considering a medical ID bracelet or GPS tracking device (like an Apple AirTag).
- Securing doors if needed and alerting neighbors to watch for signs of confusion.
- Calling 911 immediately if someone goes missing. Do not wait.

Keep in mind that wandering isn't deliberate misbehavior—it's a sign of your loved one's illness. Responding with calm reassurance and your prepared safety steps in advance can help keep your loved one safe while maintaining their dignity and independence.

To read more, visit [this link](#).

## RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Are you interested in helping us advance brain health by participating in research? We are currently connecting volunteers with studies focused on memory, aging, caregiving, and brain health. Opportunities vary and may include online surveys, educational programs, or in-person visits. For a full list of our studies, visit [this link](#).



## Study Spotlight: Research on Alzheimer's in African American Families

Researchers at Wake Forest University are leading a study to better understand why African Americans are nearly twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

They are seeking individuals from families with one or more members affected by Alzheimer's or severe memory loss. The study aims to identify genes that may increase the risk of memory problems with a goal of applying this information to reduce health-related differences in Alzheimer's disease risk, making a positive difference in many lives.



Participation is voluntary, with no travel required, and you will be reimbursed for your time. Participants will be asked to share family and medical history, complete brief memory and thinking assessments, and provide a blood sample. Families will receive updates on the study's progress. If you are interested, you can fill out the [Studies Interest Form](#).

### ASK THE EXPERT – YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED

**Question:** What should my target heart rate be during exercise?

**Answer:** NC Brain Health's co-director, Dr. Kathleen Welsh-Bohmer, shares that numerous studies report moderate exercise, like brisk walking, is ideal for overall health and brain health. The American Heart Association defines moderate intensity as 50–85% of your maximum heart rate. To estimate your maximum heart rate, subtract your age from 220. Then multiply that number by 0.50 and 0.85 to find your target range. If you're new to exercise, aim for the lower end of the range and gradually work your way up as your fitness improves.

For those who would prefer not to calculate a target heart rate range, the Mayo Clinic offers simple guidelines to gauge intensity based on how you feel. During moderate exercise, your breathing should quicken, but you shouldn't feel out of breath. You'll likely begin to sweat lightly after about 10 minutes, and you should be able to talk but not sing. These simple signs can help you gauge whether you're moving at the right pace to support both heart and brain health.

Do you have questions about brain health? Submit them to us at [ncbrainhealth@duke.edu](mailto:ncbrainhealth@duke.edu).



## CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY AT UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Memory Café**

**Fridays, March 13 & April 10, 2026 | 10:00–11:00 AM | In-Person**

**North Regional Library, Children’s Programming Room, 221 Milton Rd, Durham, NC**

Come join us for a monthly activity for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Memory Cafés host activities designed to engage in the present without the pressure of using short-term memory.

Register for March 13 at [this link](#).

Register for April 10 at [this link](#).

### **[Encore Sentimental Journey Singers](#)**

**Mondays beginning March 16, 2026 | 2:30 PM | In-Person**

**Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill, NC**

A 6-week program featuring a community chorus for people with early to mid-stage memory loss, their care partners, and volunteer singers. Hosted by the Orange County Department on Aging.

For more information and to register, visit [this link](#).



### **[Dementia Partners Support Group – Asheville YMCA](#)**

**First & Third Mondays | 6:00–7:00 PM | In-Person**

In collaboration with Dementia Partners AVL, this community group offers support to people living with dementia and those supporting a loved one with dementia. This event is free and open to everyone. Sign up at the front desk or online.

Questions? Contact Lisa at [lmurphy@ymcawnc.org](mailto:lmurphy@ymcawnc.org).

Register at [this link](#).



## [29th Annual Chancellor's Walk & Health Fair](#)

**March 21, 2026 | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM | In-Person**

**L.T. Walker Physical Education and Recreation Complex, 1450 S Alston Ave, Durham, NC**

Join North Carolina Central University for this free community event celebrating health and wellness. This year's theme is "Protecting Health and Peace: From Self to Community." The morning includes a walk on campus trails, free health screenings, and health vendors.

Questions? Contact Ruby Messick at [rmessick@ncsu.edu](mailto:rmessick@ncsu.edu).

For more information, visit [this link](#).



## [Science Café: Brain Night](#)

**Thursday, March 26, 2026 | 6:00–8:30 PM | In-Person & Virtual**

**NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, NC**

Meet local neuroscientists and interact with hands-on brain- and behavior-themed exhibits suitable for all ages. Short, accessible talks will celebrate the brain and share what local researchers are discovering. Guest speaker Dr. Christa Baker will deliver an exciting keynote presentation at 7:00 PM, followed by questions from the audience.

To learn more, visit [this link](#).

## [Free Wellness and A1C Screenings](#)

**Tuesday, April 15, 2026 | 10:00 AM–1:00 PM | In-Person**

Outer Banks Health offers free wellness screenings, including blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, blood sugar, and body mass index screenings, as well as health coaching. A1C screenings will also be available. Appointments are highly recommended and take priority. Walk-ins are welcome if appointments are available. All screenings will take place on the Outer Banks Health Coach vehicle in the parking lot.

Questions? Call 252-449-4529.

To secure a spot, visit [this link](#).



**NC Registry for Brain Health**

## [33rd Annual Triangle Walk to Defeat Dementia](#)

Sunday, April 26, 2026 | 1:00–4:00 PM | In-Person

21 Fenton Main Street, Cary, NC

Join caregivers, families, and supporters for the Walk to Defeat Dementia. This will be a day of celebration and remembrance as we take action and provide hope to those living with dementia right here in North Carolina. The NC Registry for Brain Health has a team walking, and we encourage you to join us!

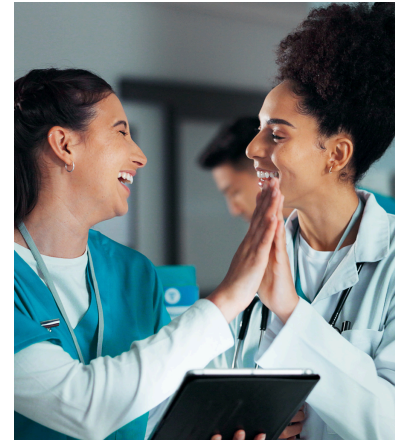
For more information and to register, visit [this link](#).

### EVENTS FOR HEALTH & RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS

#### [2026 Dementia Care and Caregiving Research Summit](#)

March 17–19, 2026 | Virtual

The 2026 Dementia Care and Caregiving Research Summit builds on progress of the previous Care Summits to review research progress, highlight innovative and promising research, and identify remaining unmet research needs with input from the research community, persons living with dementia and their care partners, those who provide healthcare or services and supports to persons living with dementia, and other interest holders.



To learn more, visit [this link](#).

### STAY IN THE LOOP!



Visit our [website](#) for updates and resources.



Follow us on [Facebook](#) to continue the conversation.



Reach out with questions or comments by email at [ncbrainhealth@duke.edu](mailto:ncbrainhealth@duke.edu).



NC Registry for Brain Health