

AME Church targets Alzheimer's disease

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [December 4, 2019](#) issue

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has announced a three-year partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, aiming to educate the denomination's 2 million members about the disease.

Historically, black Americans have been under-included in research studies related to Alzheimer's. New research suggests they may have an increased risk of Alzheimer's and other cognitive impairments when compared to non-Hispanic whites. According to the AME, black Americans are also less likely to get a correct diagnosis, which results in "in less time for treatment and planning."

For Bishop Harry L. Seawright, chair of the AME's Commission on Health, the mission is personal. His mother died from Alzheimer's and his sister has dementia.

"Many in our community suffer with hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and other illnesses that can increase the risk of Alzheimer's," he said in a press release. "We want to encourage our community to learn more so they can reduce their risk. We also want to support our caregivers, who struggle with such loss, including a loved one who may no longer remember them."

As part of the partnership, the AME Church is sharing materials from the Alzheimer's Association on its Health Commission website. Church leaders will also focus on engaging members in six key activities, including participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's, expanding research and other scientific opportunities, and supporting state and federal advocacy efforts related to Alzheimer's.

"We intend for this to be a robust partnership," said Rey Martinez, chief diversity and inclusion officer, Alzheimer's Association. "We want AME Church members to be engaged in every aspect of the Alzheimer's Association mission. The AME Church is an influential voice and has been a proven champion for so many important faith-based issues. We're proud to join with it in the fight against Alzheimer's."