

**A RUSH TO GET TREATMENT:**

# When Alzheimer's Drugs Arrive, How Prepared Will We Be to Meet Demand?

AN ASSESSMENT OF U.S. HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

## Early intervention is the key.

Because no drug has thus far been shown to reverse established Alzheimer's dementia, halting progression in early stages of the disease is the most likely pathway for treatment. There is hope that one or more drug therapies, including infused drugs, may become available by 2020. At that point, a complex patient journey will start—**sending those over the age of 55 on a four-part path**, involving various specialists with multiple appointments at different facilities, to:

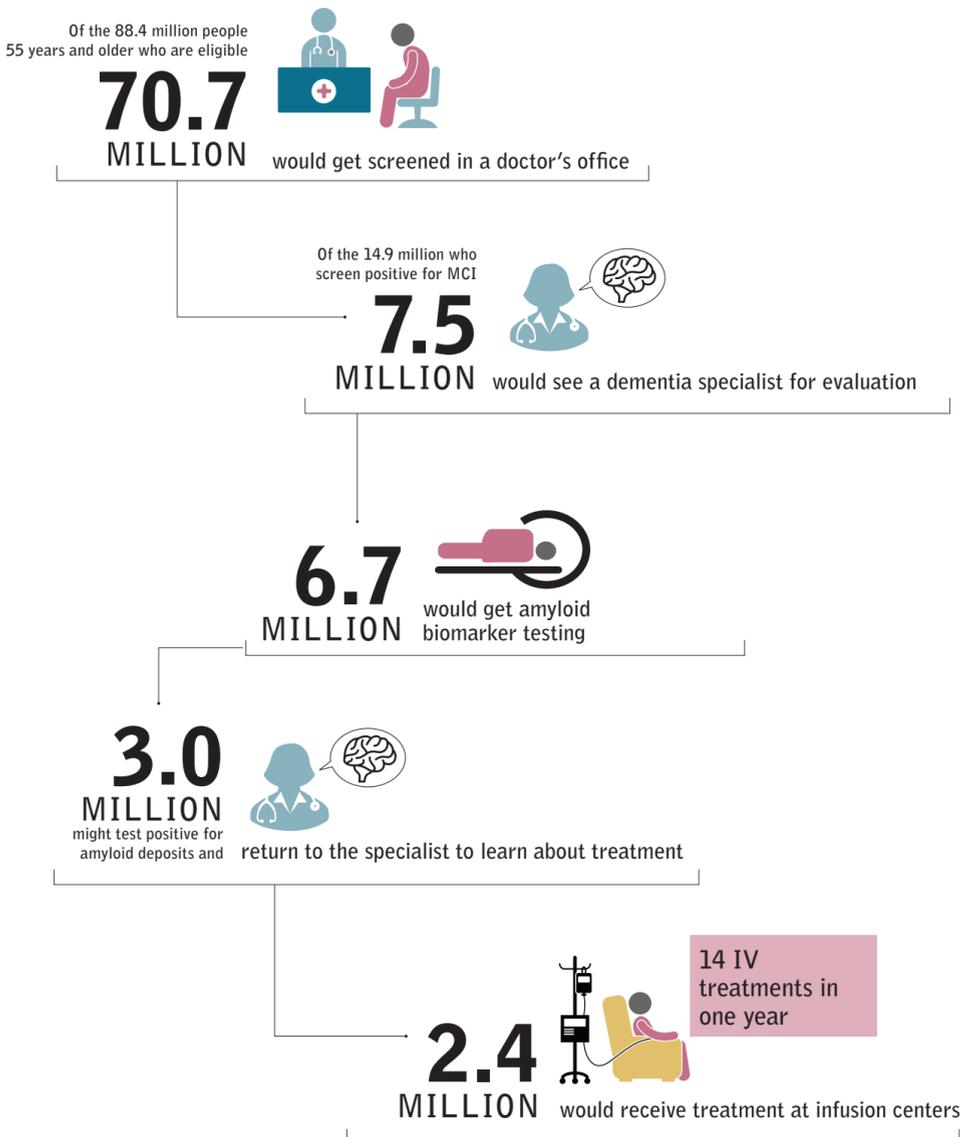
### AN ANTICIPATED RUSH TO TREATMENT FACILITIES

A deluge of patients will arrive at the doors of limited-capacity centers—first screening and dementia specialist offices, then testing facilities, and, finally, treatment centers.

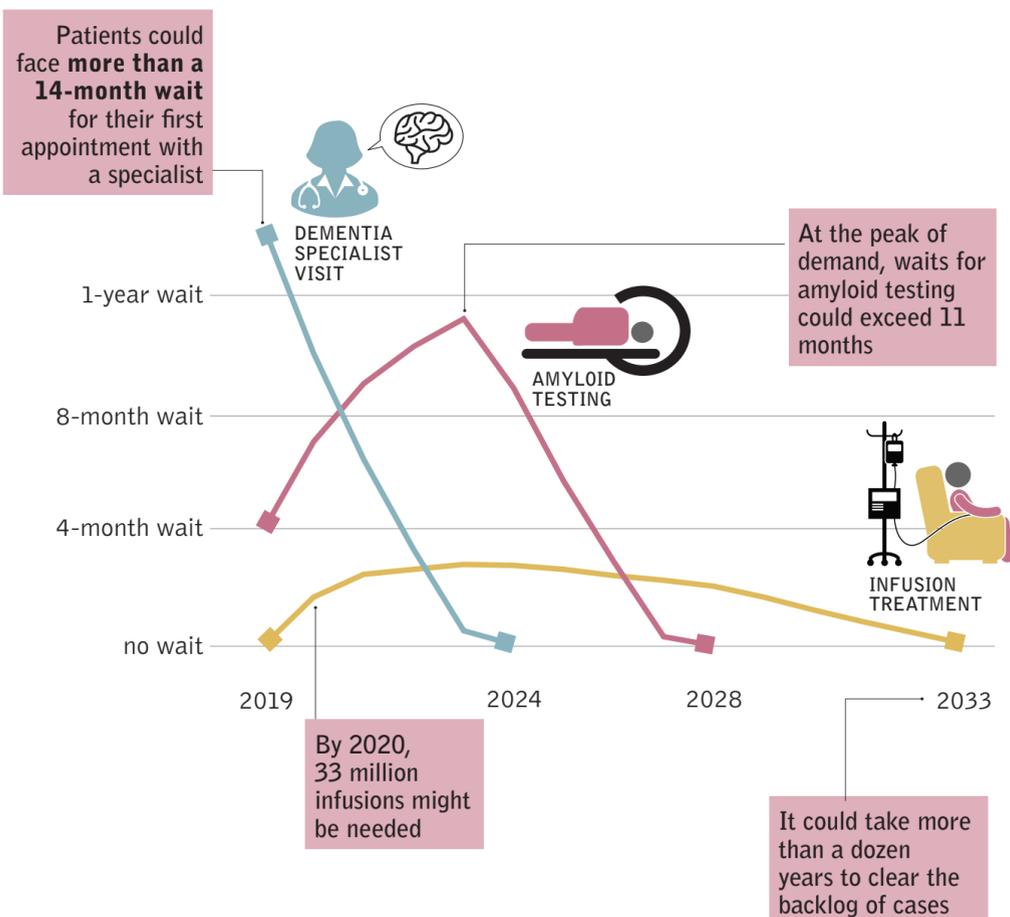
- 1. Screen** for mild cognitive impairment (MCI).
- 2. Evaluate** for potential Alzheimer's disease.
- 3. Test** for signs of brain pathology.
- 4. Treat** with intravenous (IV) infusion therapy.

Ideally, this process would happen as quickly as possible to prevent progression, but is the U.S. health care system ready? Projections based on a simulation model developed by RAND researchers suggest otherwise.

## Millions of patients would need to be seen.



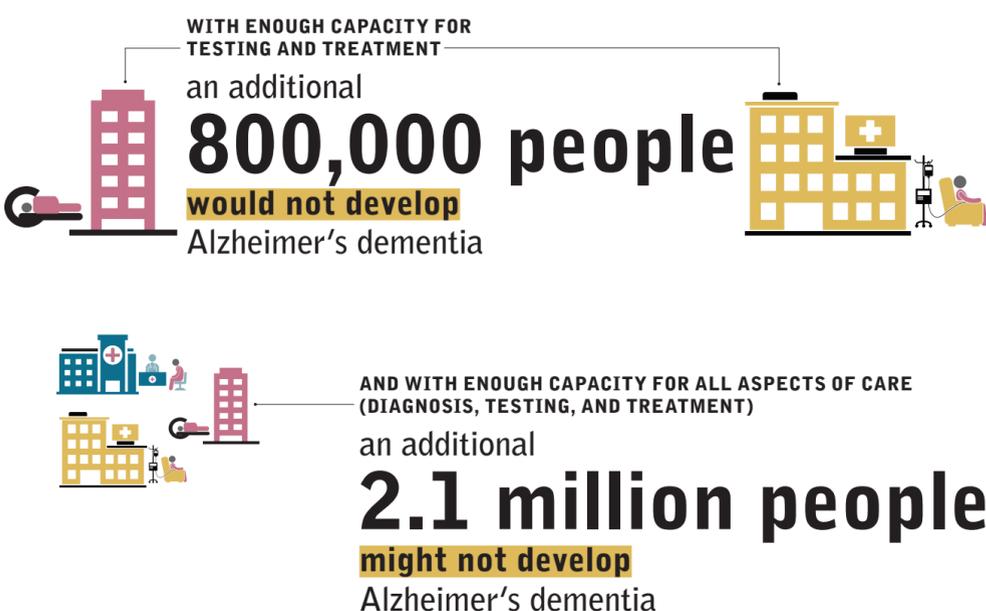
## Wait times might be extensive.



## Delays in access to care could result in people getting sicker.

**FAILURE TO INCREASE CAPACITY MEANS THAT AS MANY AS 2.1 million** patients might develop Alzheimer's dementia while waiting for evaluation and treatment between 2020 and 2040

## But with increased capacity, millions could be helped.



## Action is needed to reduce capacity constraints.



- Train** more providers in dementia care and **develop tools** to make them more efficient.
- Expand** the range of diagnostic options.
- Utilize** all options for infusion therapy, including the home setting.
- Ensure** appropriate coverage of services and tests.



[www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

Excerpted from *Assessing the Preparedness of the U.S. Health Care System Infrastructure for an Alzheimer's Treatment*, by Jodi L. Liu, Jakub P. Hlavka, Richard Hillestad, and Soeren Matke, RAND Corporation, RR-2272-BIOG, 2017 (available at [www.rand.org/t/RR2272](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2272)). The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

To view this infographic online, visit [www.rand.org/t/IG138](http://www.rand.org/t/IG138).

Images: Kamaga/GettyImages and the Noun Project