

Humbling is the best word to describe my experience attending the Clinical Trials in Alzheimer's Disease (CTAD) conference. To see, congregated in one place, over 1,200 of the best and brightest scientists, doctors, clinicians, and researchers from all corners of the globe, and knowing that they are devoting their life's work to finding a cure or meaningful treatments for Alzheimer's and related dementias, is the embodiment of hope for the millions living with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers. While there was news of some research setbacks, there was overall confidence that advancements were being made in areas of diagnostic tools, behavior modification, and an overall greater understanding of the basic science around Alzheimer's disease.

I was also intrigued to find the growing role of caregivers in the development of effective and impactful drug therapies. Caregivers provide added information to help researchers determine cognitive or functional improvement beyond biomarkers or clinical tests. Caregivers also play a crucial role in clinical trial recruitment and in helping demystify the clinical trial process. Caregivers can help identify various populations to allow clinical trials meet diversity or other requirements. Lastly, patient (and, in the case of dementia, caregiver) voices are becoming more influential in the drug development process at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, so caregiver involvement in the clinical trial process is becoming ever more crucial.

Most importantly, I learned that by working together—advocates, researchers, policymakers, philanthropies, government, community agencies, and the countless others whose lives are impacted by this insidious brain disorder—we can make the strides necessary to get to a cure or meaningful treatment that will end the scourge of Alzheimer's disease. The world has set a goal of finding an effective Alzheimer's treatment by the year 2025. After attending CTAD, I saw the resolve and felt the optimism that we can achieve this goal.