



**Letter of Intent to Apply for a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Special Interest Project Proposal**

**1) Applicant Information**

- a. Name of Applicant: Daniela B. Friedman, MSc, PhD
- b. Descriptive Title of Proposed Research:  
*Implementing Road Map Actions through a New Healthy Brain Initiative Network*
- c. Applicant's Contact Information:  
Daniela B. Friedman, MSc, PhD (PI)  
Associate Professor, Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior  
Core Faculty, Statewide Cancer Prevention and Control Program  
Faculty Affiliate, Prevention Research Center; Women's and Gender Studies Program  
University of South Carolina, 915 Greene Street, Room 235, Columbia SC, 29208  
Tel: 803.576.5641; Fax: 803.576.5624; Email: [dbfriedman@sc.edu](mailto:dbfriedman@sc.edu)
- d. Other Key Personnel at University of South Carolina:  
Sara Wilcox, PhD, Professor, Exercise Science & Director, Prevention Research Center (Co-I)  
Sue Levkoff, ScD, Professor, College of Social Work & SeniorSMART Center of Economic  
Excellence SmartHOME Endowed Chair (Co-I)
- e. Key Personnel at Other Institutions:  
Rebecca H. Hunter, MEd, Research Associate, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Center for  
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; Co-PI, North Carolina Healthy Aging Research  
Network (Consultant)
- f. SIP Number and Title: SIP 14-002 - Healthy Brain Initiative Research Network (HBIN) -  
Collaborating Center

## 2) Proposed Research Plan and Strengths of the Investigative Team

### a. Outline of Research Plan:

Aims. Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death among US adults. While death rates for other leading causes of death, such as cancer, are declining, rates for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia will continue to rise unless more effective ways to prevent and treat the disease are identified and implemented. Only recently have cognitive health and impairment been considered important public health issues. The work of the proposed South Carolina Healthy Brain Initiative Network (SC-HBIN) will be aligned with the *Healthy People 2020* new topic area, "Dementias, including Alzheimer's disease," that stresses the importance of increasing awareness about cognitive impairment and dementias and support for caregivers; *The National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease* (released 05/2012, updated in 2013) Goal 4 to enhance public awareness and engagement about the disease; and *The Public Health Road Map for State and National Partnerships, 2013–2018* domain focused on educating and empowering the nation. Guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Aging Research Network's (CDC-HAN) socioecologic model of healthy aging and a comprehensive portfolio of formative research on cognition and caregiving-related perceptions and communication, the proposed SC-HBIN is well-prepared to function in the role of a Collaborating Center that will aim to enhance the capacity of public health agencies and partners to implement *Road Map* actions and advance the goals of the *National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease*.

The SC-HBIN has three specific aims:

1. To collaborate with the HBIN Coordinating Center, other Collaborating Centers, CDC, and external partners on the HBIN vision and research agenda;
2. To engage with public health departments, aging service networks, and community-based organizations on *Road Map* actions focused on improving public awareness and access to available information and resources about dementias, including Alzheimer's disease; and
3. To contribute to the development, promotion, evaluation, and dissemination of consistent, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate cognitive health messaging strategies to increase public awareness and statewide policies regarding dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

### Network Activities.

Activities conducted by the HBIN will utilize existing organizational infrastructure and strong partnerships and encourage and strengthen new linkages between community, government, and public health stakeholders. Given our team's expertise and experience with communication and dissemination efforts with older adults, our proposed SC-HBIN will advance the research and training focused specifically on communication messaging and message development and testing. We will focus on the *Road Map* domain of Educate and Empower and the specific action items of E01 through E06:

E-01 Identify and promote culturally appropriate strategies designed to increase public awareness about dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, to reduce conflicting messages, decrease stigma, and promote early diagnosis.

E-02 Create awareness by contributing public health information and data about cognitive health and impairment to national reports and partners.

E-03 Encourage public health entities to provide links on their Web sites to local, state, and national dementia resources, including those specific to Alzheimer's disease and caregiving, such as [www.alzheimers.gov](http://www.alzheimers.gov).

E-04 Coordinate national and state efforts to disseminate evidence-based messages about risk reduction for preserving cognitive health.

E-05 Promote consistency of cognitive health messages among national, state, and local levels using models such the National Diabetes Education Program.

E-06 Identify and promote strategies for the public about how to communicate effectively and sensitively with persons with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and their families.

Dissemination of HBIN Network Activities to Academic- and Community-Based Partners. Activities of the proposed HBIN will be disseminated widely in peer-reviewed journals, at professional and scientific meetings,

and to national, state, regional, and local stakeholders. Our team has published extensively in relevant journals such as *The Gerontologist*, *Journal of Aging & Health*, *Aging & Society*, *American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias*, *Preventing Chronic Disease*, and *American Journal of Health Promotion* to name a few. We plan to make yearly scientific presentations at conferences to promote the efforts of the HBIN and we will share findings through presentations and reports with state divisions of public health, state coalitions, and other community partners that are addressing these important issues. We will provide our funders and project partners (e.g., Alzheimer's Association, Prevention Research Center community advisory board) with regular updates of SIP activities. We will also provide them with copies of all reports that result from the SIP. The PI and investigative team have substantial experience with broad dissemination and communication of applied research. For example, Friedman, Wilcox, and Levkoff collaborated on an interdisciplinary forum on healthy aging at USC held in 2013 for which Dr Friedman (PI) served as co-organizer. This *USC Healthy Aging Forum: A Focus on Cognition* featured the work of an interdisciplinary group of aging researchers and practitioners including Levkoff (Co-I), Friedman (PI), Wilcox (Co-I), and Beth Sulkowski (state Alzheimer's Association partner). Friedman (PI) and Hunter (Consultant) have also participated together on panels and symposia discussing the implications of their healthy aging research into practice.

The proposed investigative team members have a rich network of academic-and community-based partners and stakeholders with expertise in the areas of aging, cognitive health, cognitive impairment, dementia, and caregiving. The USC investigators are all affiliated with the university's Office for the Study of Aging that includes active collaborative work with experts in Alzheimer's disease and caregiving. Our stakeholder organizations have committed to work with us to help ensure that the educational activities and products developed from the SC-HBIN will be responsive to their various constituencies and broadly disseminated thereby extending our reach beyond what would otherwise be possible.

b. Investigative Team:

Together, this team is extremely qualified to conduct the proposed work for establishing a HBIN Coordinating Center. We are well positioned to establish and sustain the HBIN given our research and training expertise focused on healthy aging, public health, cognitive health, dementia, and caregiving; our connection to resources within USC and across the state; and our ability to connect to regional and national resources. USC houses the Palmetto State Geriatric Education Center, the Office for the Study of Aging, the SeniorSMART Center of Economic Excellence, and the South Carolina Alzheimer's Disease Registry. South Carolina also has a State Alzheimer's Plan that describes education and support for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and family caregivers as important issues and an active chapter of the Alzheimer's Association focused on awareness and education about dementia and cognitive impairment.

**Friedman's (PI)** research is focused on health communication with older adults. Specifically she evaluates how ethnically diverse groups access, understand, and use disease risk and prevention information, and she studies innovative strategies for the dissemination of evidence-based, language appropriate, and culturally relevant health messages and programs. Friedman was a PI of the large, qualitative, multi-state "Healthy Brain Study" (SIP 8-06) that was instrumental in guiding national priorities and leading the emerging evidence base on cognition- and caregiver-related attitudes and perceptions. She is currently Co-I of the CDC-funded South Carolina Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN), Co-Chair of the CDC-HAN Healthy Brain Workgroup, and PI of the CDC and NCI-funded Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network. Finally, she is Chair of the American Public Health Association's Aging & Public Health Section that has close to 800 members. As evidenced through her leadership positions, Friedman has had extensive experience guiding networks and multi-center network activities that have national relevance for healthy aging and cognition. She has published extensively on diverse populations' (e.g., older adults', caregivers', health care providers') perceptions and attitudes about cognition, and analyzed mass media messages about cognition that are shaping the public's perception and attitudes about cognitive health, cognitive impairment, and caregiving.

**Wilcox (Co-I)** is the PI of the HAN Collaborating Center at USC and she and Friedman have collaborated on research for over five years. Wilcox has expertise in the testing, disseminating, and adopting of evidence-based disease prevention programs for older adults. She also served as a researcher on the "Healthy Brain Study". She has both current and completed projects funded by the National Institutes of Health, Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Wilcox will lend her network leadership experience and research expertise with older adults, underserved populations, and health behaviors to the proposed activities of the HBIN.

**Levkoff (Co-I)** is the SeniorSMART Center of Economic Excellence SmarHOME Endowed Chair at USC. Her research focuses on enhancing healthy aging for ethnic minority populations. She has served as PI of a Data Coordinating Center funded by SAMHSA, HRSA, and the VA that implemented a randomized trial with 10 sites, examining the provision of integrated behavioral health care in primary care compared to specialized referral care. She has had extensive experience leading and collaborating on behavioral research and interventions focused on diverse older adults with dementia and caregivers of individuals with dementia.

**Hunter (Consultant)** is Co-PI of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's HAN site, active member of the CDC-HAN Healthy Brain Workgroup, and affiliate of the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (PRC). Her expertise is in environmental factors in healthy aging and community health issues. She is an expert in environmental and policy change, mobility and cognitive impairment, and patient-provider communication and attitudes about cognition. Hunter was a subcontract PI on the "Healthy Brain Study" and she and Friedman have collaborated together on cognition-focused research for about eight years. **Hunter** and **Friedman** currently serve together on the leadership team of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary synthesis of the literature on community wayfinding to ascertain directions for public health research, practice, and policy. They also are co-leading a scoping study of the peer-review literature examining (1) the public's knowledge of and opinions about the meaning of cognition and related risk and protective factors, and (2) people's perceptions about screening for cognitive impairment. This work is extremely relevant to the current domain of *Educate and Empower* in The Public Health Road Map for State and National Partnerships, 2013–2018.