

Houston Makes a Big Move in Brain Health

Business and policy leaders announce a series of bold initiatives to position Houston as an investment hub for brain health, tapping \$260 billion GDP growth potential for Texas.

HOUSTON – May 22, 2025 – Protecting and enriching human brain health and performance may be one of the most important economic strategies that businesses and governments pursue as they seek to strengthen workforces, mitigate the surging costs of brain-related diseases and drive economic growth.

That was the primary conclusion of a pivotal two-day meeting of global business and policy leaders in Houston to discuss strategies to establish the region as the global epicenter for brain health research, workforce development and innovation. The meeting, “Brain Capital: The New Competitive Edge in a Shifting Economy,” finished with the announcement of key initiatives specific to Texas and a series of recommendations for improving brain health that will be taken to the Calgary, Canada G7 Summit in June.

The rationale is clear for Texas to lead brain research programs and pioneer new workforce initiatives. The state ranks among the country’s highest in cases of Alzheimer’s Disease, with 12% of Texans working as unpaid caregivers. However, according to a new analysis presented by the McKinsey Health Institute today, there is potential for significant economic opportunity from investing in brain health interventions. In Texas, where brain health conditions make up the bulk of health issues that cost employers, investing in brain health initiatives could drive \$260 billion in local GDP impact.

To help fuel the state’s transformation as a brain health economy leader, the Texas Legislature recently passed legislation to establish the Dementia Prevention Research Institute of Texas (DPRIT). “Too many families in Texas know the ravages of Dementia,” said Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. “That is why I made DPRIT one of my top priorities this session. Because of DPRIT, and its \$3 billion investment over 10 years, Texas will become the premier destination for Dementia prevention and research in the world. Texans will have access to the best Dementia care right here at home. I am proud of the legislature’s commitment to this unprecedented investment in Dementia prevention and, ultimately, a cure. I know Texas families will benefit for generations to come. I look forward to DPRIT receiving Texas voters’ approval of the program’s creation in November.”

There is a growing consensus among business leaders in Houston that the convergence of innovative companies, medical research centers, business-friendly policies and deep base of talent will fuel the region’s leadership in brain health. “Brain capital will be an essential currency as we prepare workers to thrive and evolve with the technologies, societal shifts and economic uncertainties of the coming decades,” said Eric Mullins, chairman and CEO of Lime Rock Resources and a member of the board of directors of the Greater Houston Partnership. “When business leaders step up, they unlock capital for R&D, model best practices in employee well-being and rally communities around a shared economic vision. The Greater Houston Partnership will work with our member companies to ensure brain health programs are supported.”

Brain health conditions currently are responsible for more than \$1 trillion in lost productivity globally. These costs are expected to balloon to nearly \$16 trillion globally by 2030, a call to action for businesses, health systems and governments to address the issue in a transformative and coordinated manner.

“Brain disorders represent an imminent crisis that we can avoid if we prioritize brain health innovations and nurture the brain capital of the global workforce today,” said George Vradenburg, chairman of UsAgainstAlzheimer’s, organizer of the Houston event. “We can unlock \$26 trillion in

global economic opportunities by boosting labor productivity, sparking new products and services and extending healthy working years. But that requires businesses and policymakers to work together with shared urgency.”

To ensure momentum is carried through from DPRIT legislation and Texas leverages its potential to become the world’s capital for brain health research and workforce development practices, leaders attending the Brain Capital event announced the launch of an advocacy campaign to build support for passing DPRIT during a ballot measure in November 2025.

“Our work to deliver better brain health to Texas and the world is only just beginning,” said Dr. Jochen Reiser, president of The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) and CEO of the UTMB Health System. “Investing in brain capital means protecting our cognitive health, boosting economic growth and securing a future-ready workforce – goals that we believe Texans will rally behind.”

Building the political commitment to position Texas at the vanguard of brain health is an important test that can be met this year. Translating voter support into action in the business community is the next hurdle.

To facilitate that step, the Center for Houston’s Future, which is currently developing a new strategic plan for the Houston region called Vision 2050, announced its intention to make the Brain Economy a key part of the work. The Center will convene leaders across the region to position Houston to become the global leader in the Brain Economy and to serve as a blueprint for other cities to build brain capital at scale.

“Houston has a clear track record leading the transition of industry sectors,” said David Gow, CEO of the Center for Houston’s Future. “By launching a focused Brain Economy transition plan, Houston can integrate neuroscience, prevention, workforce resilience and cognitive innovation across sectors – preparing businesses and communities for an AI-driven future. Houston has the talent, infrastructure and vision to lead the nation in the next great economic transformation.”

Additional information on the program, speakers and outcomes of the “Brain Capital: The New Competitive Edge in a Shifting Economy” event can be found [here](#).

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About UsAgainstAlzheimer’s

UsAgainstAlzheimer’s is engaged in a relentless pursuit to end Alzheimer’s, the sixth leading killer in America. Our work centers on prevention, early detection and diagnosis, and equal access to treatments regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. To achieve our mission, we give voice to patients and caregivers while partnering with government, scientists, the private sector, and allied organizations -- the people who put the “Us” in UsAgainstAlzheimer’s. For more information, visit us at [UsAgainstAlzheimer’s](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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