

Alzheimer News

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President Obama signs landmark legislation laying the foundation for a national Alzheimer strategy

As the leading care, research and advocacy organization for Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association applauds President Obama for signing the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) into law. NAPA creates for the first time a coordinated national strategy to confront one of America's most feared and costly diseases, a disease that will only plague more baby boomers as they age. Given the scale of the Alzheimer epidemic and the growing number of Americans directly affected every single day, NAPA will provide an essential framework within the government that recognizes the Alzheimer crisis is no longer emerging but is here.

"The Alzheimer's Association is pleased that a much needed plan will now be put into place to address the challenges of Alzheimer's disease, currently the sixth-leading cause of death in this country. In fact, among the 10 leading causes of death, it is by far the fastest growing — increasing more than 50 percent from 2000 to 2007," said Harry Johns, Alzheimer's Association president and CEO. "Given the devastation experienced by millions of families because of this disease and the staggering economic costs, particularly to Medicare and Medicaid, we must have an effective strategy now. The fact that Alzheimer's is the only one of the top 10 causes of death without a way to prevent, cure or even slow it underscores the critical need for the swift, aggressive implementation of this legislation."

Building on the work of the Alzheimer's Association and the recommendations of the Alzheimer's Study Group, an independent, bipartisan panel created to evaluate the government's current

efforts to combat the disease, NAPA will lead to the creation of a national strategic plan to overcome the Alzheimer's disease epidemic. It would also establish an inter-agency council to work with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to give a full assessment of what needs to be done to address the threat of Alzheimer's on multiple fronts including care, research and support. NAPA ensures strategic planning and coordination of the fight against Alzheimer's across the federal government as a whole.

"Beyond the human impact on families which cannot be underestimated, the economic burden — with total care costs escalating from \$172 billion today to more than \$1 trillion by 2050 — are significant as well," said Robert J. Egge, Alzheimer's Association vice president of public policy. "Alzheimer's leaves American families, Medicare, Medicaid and our healthcare system defenseless against skyrocketing costs, and it leaves each of us vulnerable to the wide-ranging effects of this devastating disease. We need transformative, cost-effective strategic solutions to tackle a national public health emergency with widespread social and economic consequences. NAPA will help to put the nation on the right track and we commend the Obama administration for recognizing this."

The Alzheimer's Association stands with millions of Alzheimer families in thanking President Obama for signing this legislation into law and looks forward to working with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to fulfill the promise of NAPA.

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**Alzheimer's Association**

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's.