

SOUTH CAROLINA'S 2017 STATE POLICY PLATFORM

84,000 South Carolinians are living with Alzheimer's — 11% of South Carolina's seniors! By 2025, that number is projected to grow to 120,000 South Carolinians with Alzheimer's.

Given the sweeping economic, social, and psychological impact Alzheimer's disease has on South Carolinians, the state needs a proactive response to this issue. The Alzheimer's Association will focus on the following policy priorities in South Carolina in 2017:

1) Ensure continued state funding for the Alzheimer's Caregiver Respite Program.

In 2016, the Alzheimer's Caregiver Respite Program was funded at \$900,000 through the Department of Mental Health. This unique program supports the mental health needs of family caregivers who are providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or another dementia.

- **Maintain funding for Alzheimer's Caregiver Respite at \$900,000 within Department of Mental Health budget.** The Alzheimer's Caregiver Respite Program is a small investment to protect the health and well-being of family caregivers and prevent crisis scenarios, potentially delaying the need for more expensive levels of care and reliance on Medicaid long-term care. This priority addresses Recommendation #9 in our Alzheimer's State Plan and Recommendation #17 in "Creating Direction: A Guide for Improving Long-Term Care in South Carolina."

2) Implement "Creating Direction: A Guide for Improving Long-Term Care in SC."

In 2015, the neutral, nonpartisan Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) released "Creating Direction: A Guide for Improving Long-Term Care in South Carolina," which aims to improve long-term services and supports in our state and develop cost-effective solutions to current and future challenges. As an active stakeholder, the Alzheimer's Association is addressing the needs of Alzheimer's families within the broader scope of long-term care. One area of particular focus includes:

- **Ensure vulnerable adult are protected through an adequate Adult Protective Services (APS) Program and have access to preventative service that keep them safely in their home and form requiring more expensive services (Recommendation #15).** We support budget requests to increase funding to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to support APS caseworker staffing and training. We are also working with collaborators such as AARP SC and the SC Bar Association to identify the service array needed to provide vulnerable adults with assistance and guidance in the least restrictive ways in order to prevent higher-level interventions.

3) Establish Alzheimer's disease as a public health priority in South Carolina.

Just as obesity or diabetes are public health epidemics requiring a large-scale interventions, we must lay the groundwork now to improve the quality of life for those living with the Alzheimer's disease and reduce the risk of cognitive loss for our aging population. The 2015 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System survey found that 12% of South Carolinians age 45 or older are experiencing subjective cognitive decline, and over 60% of them reported functional difficulties as a result (such as giving up day-to-day activities).

- **Utilizing the CDC Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map, the Alzheimer's Association will collaborate with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control - Division of Healthy Aging to disseminate evidence-based messages about risk reduction for preserving cognitive health.** Tactics include conducting a public awareness campaign and integrating evidence-based risk reduction messages into existing health outreach.

For more information on these issues, please contact:

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The South Carolina Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association serves the entire state through a network of regional offices in Anderson, Greenville, Spartanburg, Columbia, Myrtle Beach and Charleston.

Contact the Alzheimer's Association's toll-free **Helpline at 800.272.3900** for emotional support, local resources, and information about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. We're here to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The mission of the Alzheimer's Association 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.
