



THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS.™

December 15, 2015

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel
U.S. House of Representatives
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Reed
U.S. House of Representatives
2437 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, II
U.S. House of Representatives
2335 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Engel, Representative Reed and Representative Cleaver:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association® and its nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your leadership on issues important to Americans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, as well as their families and caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association supports the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act of 2015* (H.R. 3119) and its goal of supporting and expanding the availability and awareness of palliative care and hospice services.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, neurodegenerative and fatal disease for which there is currently no treatment or cure. Palliative care and hospice are appropriate services for persons in the advanced stages of this terminal disease, as death usually follows within one to two years. A number of studies conclude that hospitalization is not recommended for individuals with advanced dementia, given the life expectancy of the individual, the significant burdens of aggressive treatment, and the difficulty of pain management for those who cannot communicate in the hospital setting. As a result, the use of palliative treatment and hospice among individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is growing. In 2009, about 17 percent of hospice admissions had a primary diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia. As the baby boom generation continues to age, the numbers of Americans with Alzheimer's disease is expected to grow from around five million in 2015 to more than 14 million by 2050. It is vital that health care professional education and training efforts in palliative care grow in order to meet the future demand for these critical services.

The *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act* would increase access to palliative care and hospice by improving palliative care education in medical schools as well as other health care professional academic programs, providing incentives to health care professionals to enter the palliative care field, enhancing research in palliative care, and raising public awareness on the benefits of these services. In addition, the legislation is consistent with findings and recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine expert panel on advanced dementia, as well recommendations made by the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Care, Research, and Services.

We appreciate your leadership on these issues, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias have access to high-quality care. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Conant, Director of Federal Affairs, at RConant@alz.org or at 202-638-7121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Egge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Egge
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs
Alzheimer's Association