

alzheimer's  association®

**a call to congress:
make alzheimer's a
national priority**

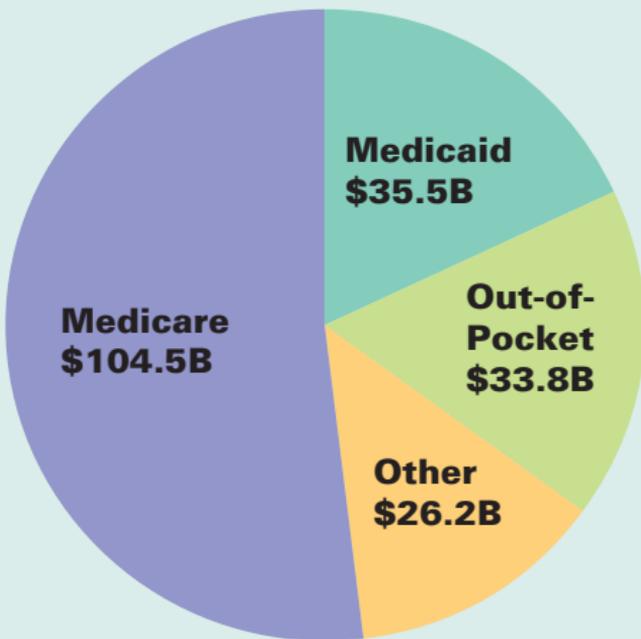


the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer®

Alzheimer's is helping to bankrupt America.

One in eight Americans aged 65 and older has Alzheimer's disease — and another American develops Alzheimer's every 68 seconds. Caring for those with this devastating disease will cost American society an estimated \$200 billion in 2012, including \$140 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid.

2012 Costs of Alzheimer's = \$200 Billion



Source: *2012 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*

With the aging of the baby boomers, the number of families affected — and the costs this will impose on the federal budget — will only get worse. Medicare and Medicaid will spend over \$800 billion (in today's dollars) caring for those with Alzheimer's in 2050 — unless we take bold action now.

Alzheimer's is a public health crisis.

Alzheimer's kills, but not before it takes everything away. It steals a person's memories, judgment and independence. It robs spouses of lifetime companions and children of parents and grandparents. It destroys the financial security of millions of families.

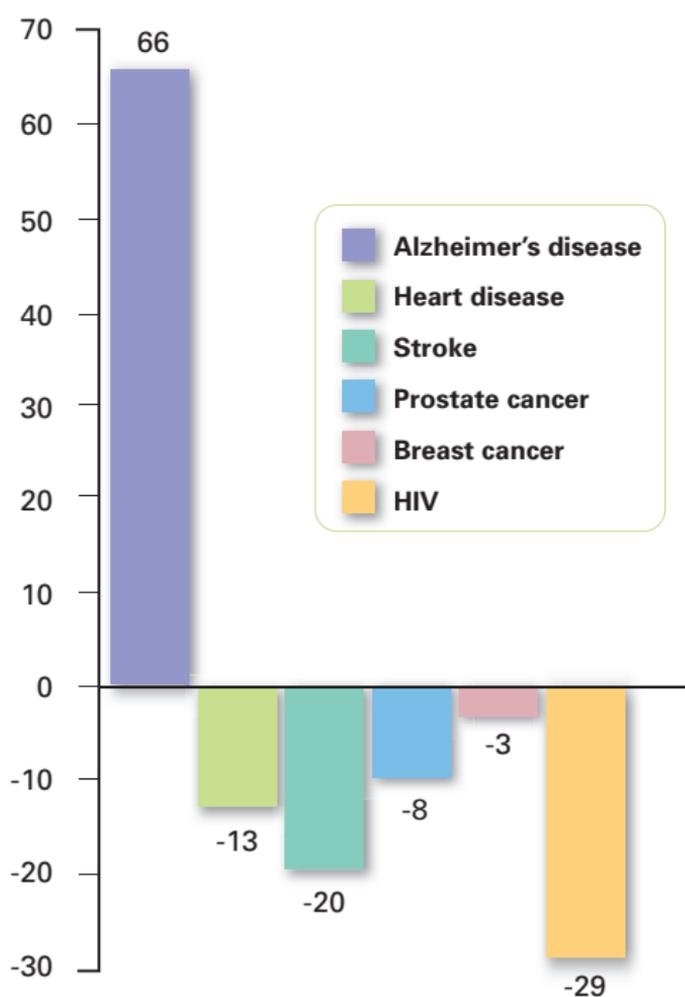
Alzheimer's is a national crisis, affecting Americans across all walks of life and across all regions of the country. The federal government must tackle Alzheimer's not only as an aging issue, but also as a public health crisis.

- An estimated 5.4 million Americans, including up to 200,000 people under age 65, have Alzheimer's disease. It is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States.
- Over 15 million family members and friends face the enormous physical, emotional and financial toll of caring for a person with the disease — and provide more than \$210 billion annually in unpaid care.
- An estimated 800,000 individuals with Alzheimer's — more than one in seven — live alone, and up to half of them do not have an identifiable caregiver. They are exposed to higher risks, including falls, wandering from home, malnutrition and accidental deaths.

The federal government cannot ignore Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's is a fatal, irreversible disease. Today, there are no survivors. And, while the number of deaths from heart disease, prostate cancer, breast cancer, stroke and HIV is declining, the number of deaths from Alzheimer's is rising.

Percentage change in selected causes of death, 2000 - 2008



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

This devastating and heartbreaking disease cannot be ignored. The Alzheimer's Association calls on the federal government to take bold action to confront this epidemic.

action 1

Increase the commitment to Alzheimer's research.

Alzheimer's disease is the only cause of death among the top 10 in America without a way to prevent, cure or even slow its progression. This crisis can only be solved through a greater commitment to Alzheimer's research.

Scientists believe we are at a tipping point. We have the ideas, the technology and the will, but we do not have the commitment from the federal government to get the job done.

For every \$2.80 that Medicare and Medicaid spend caring for someone with Alzheimer's, the federal government invests only a penny on Alzheimer's research. To address this chronic underinvestment in research, the federal government must:

- Establish Alzheimer's disease as a research priority at the National Institutes of Health
- Provide sufficient research funding to develop treatments and a cure for Alzheimer's disease

We are going to pay for Alzheimer's one way or another — either now or later. Given the financial burden Alzheimer's puts on an already-strained Medicare program — and the growing burden it will place on the federal budget in the future — a commitment to research today will yield savings tomorrow.

action 2 Increase diagnosis and care planning.

In order to provide better medical care and outcomes for individuals with Alzheimer’s and other dementias, we must increase access to detection, diagnosis and care planning — and ensure that a diagnosis is noted in the individual’s medical record.

Unfortunately, most people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias have not been diagnosed. Half or more of those with the disease do not have a diagnosis in their medical records.

This must change. Medicare must cover a package of primary care services to increase the possibility of diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and to improve care. That package must include:

- Diagnostic evaluation
- Care planning
- Medical record documentation

Over the years, studies have shown that the provision of these types of services results in higher quality of care, increased use of needed community services, reduced patient behavioral and psychiatric symptoms, reduced caregiver stress and depression, and better care coordination by multiple providers.

action 3 Implement a coordinated strategic plan to address Alzheimer's disease.

In 2050, up to 16 million Americans will have Alzheimer's disease, costing society \$1.1 trillion (in today's dollars). This will create an enormous strain on the health care system, families and the federal budget.

Recognizing this growing crisis, Congress unanimously passed and the President signed into law the *National Alzheimer's Project Act* (NAPA) (Public Law 111-375), calling for the creation of a National Alzheimer's Plan to help those with the disease and their families today and to change the trajectory of the disease for the future.

In implementing the Plan, Congress and the Administration must:

- Commit the resources necessary to prevent, treat, delay the onset, or slow the progression of Alzheimer's
- Ensure that those with Alzheimer's have the disease detected and diagnosed at an early stage, receive care planning, and have access to coordinated and high-quality health care throughout the course of the disease
- Create a long-term services and supports system that is dementia-capable and that supports caregivers in maintaining their health and vitality

Make an impact in the fight against Alzheimer's.

To learn more about how the federal government can assist people with Alzheimer's disease, please call the Alzheimer's Association Public Policy Office at 202.393.7737 or contact **Rachel.Conant@alz.org**.

For more information on Alzheimer's Association constituent services, such as our 24/7 Helpline, visit **alz.org**.

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's 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.

Alzheimer's Association
Public Policy Office
1212 New York Ave., NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20005-6105

800.272.3900
alz.org

© 2012 Alzheimer's Association. All rights reserved.
This is an official publication of the Alzheimer's Association but may be distributed by unaffiliated organizations and individuals. Such distribution does not constitute an endorsement of these parties or their activities by the Alzheimer's Association.