

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am writing to urge you to support a \$200 million increase for research funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on Alzheimer's disease. These funds will support additional research into developing innovative treatments and diagnostics that can help delay the onset of symptoms and ultimately cure Alzheimer's. It is critical to provide sufficient resources to implement a smart and strategic National Alzheimer's Plan. Without a substantial investment, our commitment to end Alzheimer's disease is simply an empty promise.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive illness of the brain, which affects an individual's ability to think and function. The disease progresses from mild impairment to an advanced stage in which the individual loses the ability to communicate, fails to recognize loved ones, and becomes bed-bound and totally reliant on someone for all their personal care, requiring around-the-clock attention. Caring for individuals with Alzheimer's is difficult, expensive and heartbreaking. Existing treatments provide at best only modest symptomatic relief over a short duration. We still lack effective disease modifying treatments or prevention techniques.

Because age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's, the rapidly growing number of older Americans will lead to a corresponding rapid growth in the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease. The number of people living with Alzheimer's disease is projected to grow from more than 5 million today to as many as 16 million in 2050. One in nine Americans over 65 will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and the proportion of individuals affected rises with age.

Alzheimer's disease also poses an increasingly dire threat to our nation's fiscal future. According to the findings of an NIH-funded study that appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Alzheimer's is now the most expensive disease in America. In 2014, the United States is estimated to spend \$214 billion caring for individuals with Alzheimer's, with \$150 billion being borne by Medicare and Medicaid. This means nearly one out of five Medicare dollars is spent on a person with Alzheimer's. Unless we move quickly to address this crisis and find better treatments for those who have it, these costs will grow swiftly in lock step with the numbers of those affected, and Alzheimer's will increasingly overwhelm our health care system.

We must decisively address this national epidemic. With increasing numbers of Americans affected by this devastating disease and its escalating impact on the federal budget, we simply must allocate resources to overcome this disease. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,