

2017 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Alzheimer's is a growing crisis for our families and the economy. The federal government must address the challenges the disease poses and take bold action to confront this crisis now.



1 Increase the commitment to Alzheimer's research

Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in America, costing an estimated \$259 billion in 2017. By mid-century, the number of people with the disease is set to nearly triple. And, the costs are projected to more than quadruple to \$1.1 trillion, with two-thirds of these costs paid by Medicare and Medicaid. If we meet the goal of the National Alzheimer's Plan to have an Alzheimer's treatment by 2025, Medicare spending on those with the disease would be reduced by nearly 25 percent in 2050 alone – and the federal government would recoup its research investment within three years. While Congress has recently provided additional funding for Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the commitment continues to fall far short of the need. For every \$100 that the NIH spends on Alzheimer's research, Medicare and Medicaid spend \$16,000 caring for those with the disease. Consistent with the Alzheimer's Bypass Budget issued by the NIH, Congress must continue its commitment to the fight against Alzheimer's and other dementias by increasing funding for Alzheimer's research by at least an additional \$414 million in fiscal year 2018.

2 Educate providers on palliative and hospice care

Nearly half of all people with Alzheimer's and other dementias are in hospice care at the time of their death. However, less than half of surveyed nursing homes have some sort of palliative care program. For people with advanced dementia, such team-based care – which focuses on managing and easing symptoms, reducing pain and stress, and increasing comfort – improves quality of life, controls costs, and enhances patient and family satisfaction. But, as the demand for such coordinated care grows with the aging population, more must be done to ensure an adequately trained workforce. The Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (S. 693/H.R. 1676) would increase palliative care and hospice training for health care professionals, launch a national campaign to inform patients and families about the benefits of palliative care, and enhance research on improving the delivery of palliative care.