



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

### AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** May 6, 2014

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** LAUNCHING THE ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

#### **SUMMARY**

##### **Overview**

Alzheimer's disease is reaching epidemic proportions and the fatal illness is taking an escalating toll on San Diego County households and the region's healthcare system. More than 60,000 local residents are living with the disease and that figure is expected to double by 2030 as the elderly population surges. The death rate from Alzheimer's in San Diego County is among the highest in California and it has climbed from the region's fifth leading cause of death to the third.

Caregivers are also affected by Alzheimer's disease with 80% of Alzheimer's patients being taken care of at home by over 150,000 family members in the region. The alarming annual nationwide cost of caring for people with Alzheimer's exceeds \$200 billion.

With this action, the County, as the region's chief public health agency, will be spearheading efforts to bring together caregivers and world-class researchers in the region under the umbrella of a new initiative: The Alzheimer's Project.

Today's action launches the Alzheimer's Project to oversee the creation of a regional strategy to inventory and improve caregiver resources and support efforts to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Association, care leaders and research leaders will return to the Board of Supervisors at a board conference in the fall of 2014.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

##### **CHAIRWOMAN DIANNE JACOB AND SUPERVISOR DAVE ROBERTS**

- 1) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to seek input from Alzheimer's research leaders from San Diego-area research institutes, academia, the private sector and the Alzheimer's Association to collaborate on ways to enhance the awareness, partnerships and funding for Alzheimer's disease research and to discuss obstacles, progress and areas for legislative action and return to the Board of Supervisors at a board conference this fall with recommendations.

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- 2) Direct the CAO to seek input from Alzheimer's care leaders, which would include the Alzheimer's Association, hospital administrators, experts in dementia care, medical providers, residential care and home care providers and community-based organizations to develop a countywide Alzheimer's Plan to improve the network of services available to those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers and return to the Board of Supervisors at a board conference this fall with recommendations.
- 3) Direct the CAO to work with the Alzheimer's Association, research leaders and care leaders to develop an Alzheimer's disease education and public awareness campaign focusing on the 10 signs and early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, to explore the possibility of presentations at county libraries and other county facilities and to develop a plan for providing Alzheimer's and related dementias training to public safety and social service personnel and return to the Board of Supervisors at a board conference this fall with recommendations.
- 4) Direct the CAO to draft a letter expressing this Board of Supervisors' support for the Alzheimer's Accountability Act to San Diego County's federal legislative representatives and the President.
- 5) Direct the CAO to add to the County's Legislative Program support for any legislation that increases funding for Alzheimer's disease research and provides additional resources to caregivers, family members and those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease.
- 6) Authorize the CAO to apply for any additional funding opportunity announcements, if available, to support a regional strategy to inventory and improve Alzheimer's caregiver resources, and support Alzheimer's disease education and public awareness.

**Fiscal Impact**

N/A

**Background**

Alzheimer's disease is reaching epidemic proportions and this fatal illness is taking an escalating toll on San Diego County households and the region's healthcare system. More than 60,000 local residents are living with the disease and that figure is expected to double by 2030 as the elderly population surges. The death rate from Alzheimer's in San Diego County is among the highest in California and it has climbed from the region's fifth leading cause of death to the third. Nationally, 500,000 people are dying each year with Alzheimer's disease.

The impact that Alzheimer's disease has on women is staggering. While one in eleven men over the age of 65 has Alzheimer's, the number is one in six for women. Women in their 60s are about twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's as they are to develop breast cancer.

No one survives this devastating disease and there is currently no way to prevent or cure it. However, local bio-technology and pharmaceutical companies along with research institutions are on the trail of the disease. Prominent scientists and neurologists from UCSD, the Scripps Research Institute, the Salk Institute and Sanford-Burnham are doing groundbreaking work to find a cure. The fact that leading-edge research is happening in our own backyard is something

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to take great pride in. In January, neuroscientists from across the nation launched what may be the most ambitious attempt yet to find a treatment for Alzheimer's. It is focusing on a protein in the brain that is believed to contribute to Alzheimer's. Researchers are using volunteers to test a drug that attacks the protein.

There are certainly a lot of encouraging signs when it comes to research and the good news is that the federal government will spend \$562 million this year on funding for Alzheimer's research, education, outreach and caregiver support. Unfortunately, this record number is still dwarfed by the annual nationwide cost of caring for people with Alzheimer's, which exceeds \$200 billion. The \$562 million on Alzheimer's research is one fourth of what we'll spend this year researching heart disease. We'll spend ten times that amount on cancer research. While the number of Alzheimer's deaths from 2000 to 2010 increased 68%, deaths from several other major diseases saw significant decreases, including heart disease, prostate cancer, stroke and HIV/AIDS.

Quite often, families carry the greatest burden. Not only do many family members have to endure watching a family member or spouse lose their memory and judgment, they are sometimes the caregiver during this heartbreaking time. Taking care of a loved one with Alzheimer's can take a heavy toll on one's own mental and physical health. It's not unusual for caregivers to struggle with their own well-being. Eighty percent of Alzheimer's patients are being taken care of at home by over 150,000 family members in the region. In 2013, 15.5 million caregivers in the nation provided an estimated 17.7 billion hours of unpaid care.

With this action, the County, as the region's chief public health agency, will be spearheading efforts to bring together caregivers and world-class researchers in the region under the umbrella of a new initiative: The Alzheimer's Project.

This initiative will seek input from Alzheimer's research leaders from San Diego-area research institutes, academia, the private sector and the Alzheimer's Association to collaborate on ways to enhance the awareness, partnerships and funding for Alzheimer's disease research and to discuss obstacles, progress and areas for legislative action. These leaders will also explore how to link researchers with the public and physicians in order to increase awareness of and participation in clinical trials, to encourage the quickest possible sharing of research data to enable faster innovation and discovery and to leverage local funds to drive local research efforts.

The Alzheimer's Project will seek input from Alzheimer's care leaders, which would include the Alzheimer's Association, hospital administrators, experts in dementia care, medical providers, residential care and home care providers and community-based organizations to develop a countywide Alzheimer's Plan to improve the network of services available to those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. These leaders will inventory resources currently available and make recommendations to fill gaps such as expanding respite care, increasing geriatric psychiatric beds, promoting physician education and increasing service coverage and reimbursement.

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An education and awareness campaign will be a crucial component for community outreach of the regional Alzheimer's plan. This action will create the opportunity for the County to work with the Alzheimer's Association, research leaders and care leaders to develop an Alzheimer's disease education and public awareness campaign focusing on the 10 signs and early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, to explore the possibility of presentations at county libraries and other county facilities and to develop a plan for providing Alzheimer's and related dementias training to public safety and social service personnel. Experts on both care and cure will also be included in the San Diego County Aging Summit on June 12, 2014.

It is clear that action at the federal level will have a direct impact on Alzheimer's research and care in San Diego County. A letter will be sent to express this Board of Supervisors' support for the Alzheimer's Accountability Act to San Diego County's federal legislative representatives and the President, and the County's Legislative Program will be amended to include support for any legislation that increases funding for Alzheimer's disease research and provides additional resources to caregivers, family members and those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease.

Today's action launches the Alzheimer's Project to oversee the creation of a regional strategy to inventory and improve caregiver resources and support efforts to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Association, care leaders and research leaders will return to the Board of Supervisors at a board conference in the fall of 2014. We urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB  
Chairwoman, Second District

DAVE ROBERTS  
Supervisor, Third District

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:**  Yes  No

**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**  
 Yes  No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**  
N/A

**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**  
N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):**  
N/A

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** Districts 2 and 3

**OTHER CONCURRENCE(S):** N/A

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

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