

Public Policy Post



Alzheimer's Association Oklahoma/Arkansas Chapter
October 27, 2008

INTRODUCTION

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

The Public Policy Committee for our Chapter consists of the Arkansas Action Group and the Oklahoma Action Group, both with members from the staff, board and the community. This is our first of many periodic newsletters to keep you informed of public policy and advocacy activities in our two states.

World Alzheimer's Day Rally at Little Rock State Capitol: September 18



David Dearman, OK/AR Alzheimer's Association Board of Directors and Professor of Accounting at UALR; **Donna Hutchinson**, Arkansas State Representative; **Marisha DiCarlo**, Assistant Director Central Arkansas Alzheimer's Association; **Dawn Creekmore**, Arkansas State Representative; **Mark Fried**, Vice President of the OK/AR Alzheimer's Association

In a nutshell, the World Alzheimer's Day Rally was a big success. We discovered late in the game that a former staffer had worked with Rep. Dawn Creekmore on securing a Governor's proclamation and hosting a public event. So, in a month's time, we worked with Rep. Creekmore on promoting the event to a variety of folks. Though World Alzheimer's Day was Sep 21, we chose Sep 18 for the rally because it was a day that the majority of the legislators were in Little Rock for committee meetings.

In the process, we hired Allison Hogue as the Public Policy Coordinator. She came on about two weeks out from the event. Allison put together a paper invitation and directly contacted every legislator. The staff in Little Rock really worked like a team to get the word out. We had many regrets from legislators who, in saying they couldn't make it, they had a connection and were willing to help our efforts.

We had 40+ in attendance at the rally on the Capitol steps and about a half dozen of them were legislators. Included with the legislators was Rep. Burris who is the Vice Chair of the Senior Caucus. Rep. Creekmore spoke and read the Governor's proclamation. Board member David Dearman spoke eloquently about his mom's battle with Alzheimer's. Rep. Donna Hutchinson, from a district in NW Arkansas, spoke about her family's connection.

During the 20-minute rally, I announced the Association's plans to work with the legislature in passing the Task Force legislation next spring. With that in mind, Allison is looking to build a coalition of co-

authors for the House and Senate bills that will ultimately lead to the establishment of the Task Force. Her goal is to have 10 co-authors in the House and 5 in the Senate. With the feedback we received from the promotion to the legislators, we believe those numbers are very doable.

Where do we go from here?

Allison is working to set up a conference call with the Arkansas Action Group. Before that meeting, we will send them a draft of the state plan to get their feedback. At the meeting, we will solidify the platform.

The first day new legislation can be filed by the authors is November 17. Hopefully, we'll be ready to go at that time. Regardless, whenever it is filed, we plan to send a press release applauding the authors and putting us on the forefront. This legislation can help bring needed exposure for the Association in Little Rock.

Mark Fried

Tulsa Memory Walk: October 4

Memory Walk is our single largest advocacy recruitment opportunity where the public voice their support of the Association. Without large numbers of people participating, it is *impossible* to move policy at the national level.

The Tulsa Memory Walk was set up as a pilot program for signing up advocates for the Alzheimer's cause. Spearheaded by Bob Thomas, this Memory Walk Advocacy registration campaign will be rolled out nationally next year.

As team members were recruited they were also asked to sign up to receive federal and local updates from the Advocacy team. The "ask" was to send a post card to their congressional person having them support increased funding for research.

Volunteers within the crowd worked the day of the walk. The Tulsa Memory Walk produced over 400 advocates, 168 the day of the walk.

Michael Taylor

Over 1,000 walkers participated in the Oklahoma City Memory Walk. 250 new people signed up as advocates for the Alzheimer's cause.

We started the day with \$135,000 and will raise money up to the 30th of November.

Michael Taylor

Candlelight Vigil at Oklahoma City State Capitol: November 13

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month (NADAM) and National Family Caregivers Month — an opportunity to identify the Alzheimer's Association as the leading and best resource for caregivers and people living with the disease.

It is estimated that more than 10 million family caregivers provide daily comfort and care to those living with dementia. Evidence shows that caregivers are susceptible to such high levels of stress that their own mental and physical health suffers.

We will be lighting the Oklahoma Capitol dome in purple this year in honor of National Alzheimer Disease Awareness Month and ask that you join us. Mark your calendar to join Alzheimer's advocates from the Oklahoma and Arkansas Chapter for the 2008 Alzheimer's Candlelight Vigil.

If you're concerned about Alzheimer's, we hope you'll join your friends and family for a first ever Candlelight Vigil on the south steps of the Capitol in Oklahoma City on November 13 at 6 p.m. to let our voices be heard that it's time to take action for Alzheimer's.

We ask that each person attending wear a VOICE, MOVE, OPEN or ACT purple t-shirt that can be purchased at www.alz.org/shop. If you are unable to purchase a t-shirt, please consider wearing something purple.

Michael Taylor

OKC Memory Walk: October 25

Advocacy Training: December 2-3

Our chapter has the rarest of opportunities – two days of advocacy training by Mike Splaine, the Director of State Policy and Advocacy for National Alzheimer’s and one of the most knowledgeable experts on public policy and advocacy that you would ever hope to meet. The training will be in Oklahoma City on December 2nd at 10am through December 3rd at 4pm. National will pay all of the two-day hotel and meal expenses for anyone who attends! We encourage members of the board and Public Policy Committee to take advantage of this important session. Contact Janice Morgan if you would like to attend.

Federal Update: October 17

Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act Stalls

Alzheimer advocates made great strides in getting cosponsors for the *Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act* (S. 2102, H.R. 154). The bill lists 103 US House cosponsors and 23 US Senate cosponsors!

This bill would phase out the two-year waiting period for Medicare coverage for persons under age 65 diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s disease who may have lost a job and employer-based health insurance.

Unfortunately, **the bill will not pass this year.** We will ramp up our efforts again in early 2009 to ensure the bill is reintroduced and our race for cosponsors will resume.

Alzheimer Funding Decisions Held Up

Just days before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1, Congress and President Bush agreed to **postpone any new spending for medical research and public health programs for another five months.** Lawmakers passed a [“continuing resolution”](#) (CR), that keeps most federal programs running at 2008 spending levels through March 2009. The current delay means that the decisions to boost Alzheimer research and to continue program funding will be left to a new Congress and the new president.

Prior to the CR decision, our advocacy efforts resulted in proposed increases in research and program funding (see chart below). We will push the new Congress to vote favorably on these proposals.

Federal Funding Chart

Alzheimer Funding	2008 Budget (current)	2009 Budget (Proposed Increase)
Research (NIH)	~\$644 million	~\$662 million
State Matching Grants	\$11.4 million	\$11.4 million
24/7 Helpline	\$1 million	\$1 million
CDC Brain Health Initiative	\$1.6 million	\$1.8 million

Call to Action

All registered advocates will be asked to participate in a call to action nearly every month, all for the purpose of raising awareness in our community and with legislators, and encouraging legislative action that will further the Alzheimer’s cause.

October:
Legislators were invited to join Memory Walks.

Legislators will be invited to the OKC Candlelight Vigil on November 13.

November:
Congratulatory emails will be send to newly-elected and re-elected legislators. Legislators will receive phone call invitations to the OKC Candlelight Vigil.

Holiday Cards

Did you know that you can purchase an assortment of beautiful, unusual and relevant holiday cards that are sponsored by the Alzheimer’s Association? What a great way to raise awareness with everyone who receives one of your special cards. If you have an Insite password, go to www.insite.alz.org, in the left margin click on Shop For the Cause, then click SHOP NOW and select HOLIDAY CARDS.

