

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release

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### **ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION OFFERS NEW TOOLS TO AID DIFFICULT DRIVING CONVERSATIONS**

**- 100% of People with Alzheimer's Will Eventually be Unable to Drive Safely -  
- Families Struggle with When and How to Take Car Keys Away -**

**DENVER, October 24, 2011** – Driving demands quick reaction time and fast problem solving. Due to the progressive nature of the disease, every person with Alzheimer's will eventually become unable to drive. The Alzheimer's Association recommends that families discuss driving before a crisis, ideally while the person with Alzheimer's is still able to participate in the conversation and decision-making process.

“Driving is often associated with autonomy, so relinquishing car keys can be a very emotional and stressful process,” said Linda Mitchell, president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association of Colorado. “Educating yourself on approaches and options prior to having this difficult conversation can help ease the transition for everyone involved.”

To assist with these conversations, the Alzheimer's Association created four short videos depicting different scenarios for approaching driving and dementia. Watching the videos may give families an idea of how to start the conversation or how to respond to a particular objection. In one video, a woman in the early stages of Alzheimer's drafts a contract saying she will reach a point when she can no longer drive and gives her children permission to step in. If the person with the disease is more resistant, another technique shown in the new videos is to secure a doctor's “prescription” advising the person the Alzheimer's to no longer drive.

Following each of the videos is a list of tips and techniques families can use when having the conversation about driving. The videos are housed within the Alzheimer's Association online Dementia and Driving Resource Center, which contains helpful information about recognizing when driving is unsafe, finding alternate transportation and getting a driving evaluation. The project was supported by a grant from the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

**(more)**

## **Alzheimer's Association Driving** **2/2/2/2**

“Talking to loved ones who have Alzheimer's disease about handing over their car keys can be difficult – especially if the individual is unable or unwilling to recognize symptoms they may be experiencing,” continued Mitchell.

Some people are able to continue driving in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, but it requires ongoing evaluation to ensure safety. Following are tips from the Alzheimer's Association that it may be time to stop driving:

- Forgetting how to locate familiar places
- Failing to observe traffic signs
- Making slow or poor decisions in traffic
- Driving at an inappropriate speed
- Becoming angry or confused while driving
- Hitting curbs
- Using poor lane control
- Making errors at intersections
- Confusing the brake and gas pedals
- Returning from a routine drive later than usual
- Forgetting the destination you are driving to during the trip

The Alzheimer's Association also provides example driving contracts and local evaluation specialists. For more information on dementia and driving, visit [www.alz.org/driving](http://www.alz.org/driving).

### **The Alzheimer's Association**

The Alzheimer's Association Colorado Chapter is the premier source of information and support for the more than 72,000 Coloradans with Alzheimer's disease, their families and caregivers. Through its statewide network of offices, the Alzheimer's Association offers education, counseling, support groups, Medic Alert + Safe Return and a 24-hour Helpline, at no cost to families, and funds advancements in research to prevent, treat and eventually conquer this disease. The Alzheimer's Association advocates for those living with Alzheimer's and their families on related legislative issues, and with health and long-term care providers. For information call the Alzheimer's Association at 303-813-1669, the Helpline at 800-272-3900, or visit [alz.org/co](http://alz.org/co)

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