



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION HONORS
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSIONER MICHAEL ASTRUE
WITH HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

Washington, DC March 8, 2010 –Social Security Commissioner Michael Astrue is the recipient of the Alzheimer's Association's 2010 Humanitarian Award. The award is given each year to a public official who has made a significant contribution to help those who are struggling with Alzheimer's disease. This year, the award will be given to Commissioner Astrue in recognition of his exceptional leadership in creating the Compassionate Allowances Initiative and the decision to include early-onset Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in that initiative.

"Commissioner Astrue has worked tirelessly to ensure that disabled Americans receive the Social Security disability benefits they've earned in a timely way. I congratulate Mike for receiving this honor, and I know he joins me in admiration for the tremendous work that the Alzheimer's Association does every day," said President Barack Obama.

Harry Johns, President and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, thanked President Obama for his comments about the Alzheimer's Association and echoed the President's praise for Commissioner Astrue. "Social Security benefits are crucial to individuals under age 65 with Alzheimer's disease because they lose their jobs, income and health coverage at the very same time they face the biggest challenge of their lives: the reality of living with Alzheimer's. On behalf of all the individuals who now won't have to go through a long decision process and multiple lengthy appeals to obtain their benefits, the Alzheimer's Association is proud to honor Commissioner Astrue for establishing this initiative which helps to ease the burden of so many families."

Under Astrue's leadership, the Social Security Administration has committed to "fast-tracking" certain conditions to reduce the backlog of disability claims and streamline the application process. The Commissioner's insight and understanding that the diagnosis of Alzheimer's indicates significant cognitive impairment that interferes with daily living activities, including the ability to work, will now ensure early-onset families won't have to endure the financial and emotional toll of a long decision process.

The Alzheimer's Association urges all individuals affected by Alzheimer's to use their "voice" to educate the public about their experience. The Association is grateful for Commissioner Astrue's willingness to listen and to provide a platform for these individuals to share. During the

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public hearing on this issue, Commissioner Astrue and his colleagues heard from those living with Alzheimer's and Alzheimer researchers about the terminal nature of the disease, the disabilities that often prohibit work in even the earliest stages of the disease, and the lack of effective treatments that modify or halt disease progression. Another 600 advocates submitted written testimony about their experience trying to obtain disability benefits.

Commissioner Astrue will receive his Humanitarian Award during the Alzheimer's Association's 22nd Annual Advocacy Forum, the Alzheimer's Association's premier advocacy event that brings together advocates from across the country in three momentous days of action in the fight against Alzheimer's.

Past recipients of the Alzheimer's Association's Humanitarian Award include President Ronald Reagan, Senators Arlen Specter, Tom Harkin, Mark Hatfield, Barbara Mikulski, Jay Rockefeller, Charles Grassley and Blanche Lincoln, Representatives Steny Hoyer and Edward Markey and Josefina Carbonell, Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Aging.

Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information, visit www.alz.org.

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