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**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION BRINGS TOGETHER THOUGHT LEADERS
ON MEDICARE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT**

Washington, DC (December 5, 2010) – An assessment of cognitive impairment will be a mandatory part of the annual wellness visit for Medicare beneficiaries beginning January 2011, as part of passage of comprehensive health care reform legislation known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In the midst of the most significant demographic transformation in decades with the first wave of baby boomers beginning to turn 65 next year, assessment for cognitive impairment detection is essential as millions of these Americans begin to advance into an age of greater risk for developing Alzheimer's and other dementias.

To provide better medical care and outcomes for individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias, possible dementia must first be detected, followed by diagnosis and notation in a patient's medical record. To provide this foundation for better care to Medicare beneficiaries, the Alzheimer's Association® is pleased that cognitive impairment has been included in the Annual Wellness Visit for older Americans.

In support of this important effort, the Association has established the Medicare Cognitive Impairment Workgroup comprised of stakeholders and national thought leaders with expertise in the detection of cognitive impairment. The group will come together in January to build consensus around appropriate methods and processes that can be used in the primary care setting to detect possible cognitive impairment during the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit. If further assessment of cognition is indicated during the Annual Wellness Visit, the workgroup will also provide guidance for practitioners as to the follow-up process to determine a definitive diagnosis. Members of the group will also provide input on approaches that may help facilitate conversations with patients about cognition concerns and address patients who do not follow up if a concern is expressed.

As the leading research, advocacy, and support organization for Alzheimer's disease, the Association has been actively involved in efforts to increase early detection of Alzheimer's and other dementias. By convening stakeholders, thought leaders and experts in the Alzheimer arena to collaborate on cross-cutting solutions, the Association believes the valuable insights these leading experts will provide will help reduce undiagnosed cognitive impairment. This initiative will also help ensure vital information and assistance is offered to families to help them make better decisions about their care and treatment options.

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.