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CONTACT: Erin Heintz, 202.638.7040; erin.heintz@alz.org

LEGISLATION CONSISTENT WITH THE NATIONAL ALZHEIMER’S PLAN RE-INTRODUCED TO IMPROVE DIAGNOSIS OF ALZHEIMER’S AND STRENGTHEN CARE PLANNING

Washington, D.C., April 11, 2013 – As the world’s leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research, the Alzheimer’s Association® applauds the reintroduction of the “Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education (HOPE) for Alzheimer’s Act.” The HOPE for Alzheimer’s Act represents a critical effort to ensure individuals receive a timely and accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias and that newly diagnosed individuals and their families have access to information, resources and support services. The Alzheimer’s Association commends Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Susan Collins (R-ME) and Representatives Edward Markey (D-MA) and Christopher Smith (R-NJ) for their leadership in re-introducing this important bi-partisan legislation.

“Early detection and diagnosis are key to accessing available treatments and resources and participating in clinical trials,” said Robert Egge, the Alzheimer’s Association’s Vice President of Public Policy. “Equally important, when people with Alzheimer’s are diagnosed in the early-stage of the disease and able to participate in the planning process, we see increased quality of life for everyone.”

The HOPE for Alzheimer’s Act is consistent with the unanimous recommendations of the National Alzheimer’s Plan Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Research, Care and Services. The HOPE for Alzheimer’s Act will ensure an accurate and timely diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease; educate and support individuals with Alzheimer’s and their families upon diagnosis; and enhance assistance for people with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers to prepare for care needs.

Alzheimer’s and other dementias are common, costly, and often unrecognized problem in older adults. According to the Alzheimer’s Association 2013 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures report, as many as half of those people living with Alzheimer’s never received a diagnosis. Yet, nearly 90 percent of Americans want to know if the cause of their confusion or memory problems is Alzheimer’s disease, according to a survey of public perceptions and awareness of Alzheimer’s disease conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health. A formal, documented diagnosis is the first step in making proactive care, financial and legal decisions, rather than waiting until the throes of a crisis when options are often limited.

“Studies have shown that the ability to educate oneself and plan for the future is a tremendous asset in anticipating challenges and reducing anxiety, depression and stress,” said Egge. “As the National Alzheimer’s Plan works to meet its aggressive timeline to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer’s disease by 2025, it is critical that we measurably improve the care for the millions of Americans touched by the disease now.”

The Alzheimer’s Association is grateful to Senator Stabenow for crafting this legislation and Senator Collins and Representatives Markey and Smith, who also serve as chairs of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease. Their sustained leadership on advancing issues
that are critical to the growing Alzheimer’s community is vital and appreciated. The Alzheimer’s Association urges members of Congress to co-sponsor and support this important legislation.

Alzheimer’s Association
The Alzheimer's Association is the world’s leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s 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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