



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**CONTACT:**

Toni Williams, 202.638.8666; [toni.williams@alz.org](mailto:toni.williams@alz.org)

**ALZHEIMER'S BREAKTHROUGH ACT**

*– Alzheimer's Association Statement –*

**Washington, DC (May 13, 2011)** – As the leading advocacy, research and support organization for Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association® commends Representatives Christopher Smith (R-NJ) and Edward Markey (D-Mass) for their leadership in introducing the *Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act (H.R.1897)* in the U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation will help strengthen and increase the federal commitment to Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's largest funder of biomedical research.

Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death and the only cause of death among the top ten causes in the United States without an identified way to prevent, cure or even slow its progression. Today an estimated 5.4 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's and this number is expected to grow to as many as 16 million by mid-century without disease-modifying interventions.

“The discovery of effective treatments is the best hope to change the trajectory of Alzheimer's. This legislation requires the NIH to assess and prioritize the scientific opportunities that exist and determine what funding levels are necessary to turn these opportunities into scientific breakthroughs,” said William Thies, chief medical and scientific officer of the Alzheimer's Association. “The measure also ensures the NIH is encouraging public-private partnerships that spur robust innovative research and advancements in diagnostics, prevention and treatment.”

According to the Alzheimer's Association's *2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report, total payments for health and long-term care services for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias amount to \$183 billion, with Medicare and Medicaid making up the overwhelming majority of these costs. In fact, for every \$28,000 Medicare and Medicaid spend on care for individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias; the NIH spends only \$100 on Alzheimer's research. This disproportion underscores the need for a greater commitment to Alzheimer's research in order to find effective interventions that will reduce care costs. A treatment that delayed onset of Alzheimer's by just five years could reduce the government's spending on caring for those with the disease by 45 percent in 2050.

The leadership and dedication of Representatives Smith and Markey, who also serve as co-Chairs of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's, should be applauded. The Association is also grateful to Representatives Mike Burgess (R-TX) and Todd Platts (R-Penn.) for being original co-sponsors of the legislation and urges all members of the U.S. House to support and pass this important legislation.

**The 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](http://www.alz.org).

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