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President’s budget acknowledges Alzheimer’s disease is an unchecked threat to the nation but does not meet urgent funding needs
- Alzheimer’s Association Statement –

Washington, D.C., February 2, 2015 – President Obama’s fiscal year 2016 budget recognizes the unique threat posed by Alzheimer’s, the most expensive disease in the nation¹ and the only leading cause of death in the U.S. with no way to prevent, stop or even slow its progression, calling for a $51 million increase in Alzheimer’s research. However, without increasing funding to the levels deemed necessary by the scientific community, America is unlikely to complete the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer’s disease by 2025.

“Alzheimer’s is a triple threat unlike any other disease with its soaring prevalence, lack of treatment and enormous cost. Already the most expensive disease in the U.S., prevalence of Alzheimer’s is set to skyrocket as baby boomers enter the age of greatest risk, devastating entire families with its grueling progression for up to 20 years,” said Harry Johns, president and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association. “This prioritization of Alzheimer’s disease by the President is right, but the scale is not. In the past two funding bills, Congress recognized the amount requested for Alzheimer’s research was inadequate and provided additional amounts. We now look to Congress once again to lead in accelerating Alzheimer’s research by providing an appropriate funding increase for the nation’s biggest public health crisis, something far more substantial than the increase called for by the White House.”

With unanimous Congressional support, the National Alzheimer’s Project Act (NAPA) became law in 2011, calling for the development of the country’s first-ever national Alzheimer’s plan. In 2012, the federal government released the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease with its 2025 goal. Since then, Alzheimer’s research has received budgetary increases reflective of the fiscal climate, bringing annual federal funding for Alzheimer’s research to $591 million – still far less than other deadly, highly prevalent diseases and far short of the $2 billion a year scientists have stated is the minimum necessary to accomplish the 2025 goal of the national Alzheimer’s plan.

In an important bipartisan step forward by Congress, the fiscal year 2015 funding bill fully incorporated the Alzheimer’s Accountability Act (H.R. 4351/S. 2192), creating a formal process to ensure that scientific judgment will drive future Alzheimer’s research budget requests. Under the Alzheimer’s Accountability Act, Congress will be equipped with the best information to determine necessary Alzheimer’s research funding levels in each year leading up to 2025.

“Congress has told us that they want to hear directly from scientists what they require to finally deliver hope to the millions of American families living with Alzheimer’s. That mechanism is now law. We are certain this scientific assessment, now underway at NIH, will yield a call for a sharp increase in Alzheimer’s research funding toward levels that long ago delivered results for other major diseases,” said Maria Carrillo, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer at the Alzheimer’s Association. “The science is ready. What we’ve lacked are the resources. We urge Congress to put Alzheimer’s scientists to work. If we are committed to achieving the national Alzheimer’s plan’s 2025 goal, we can’t afford a lost year.”

Investing in scientific research and development at a more general level is also important, and the new Precision Medicine Initiative and the BRAIN Initiative are important contributions toward that end. The Alzheimer's Association looks forward to working with the Administration and Congress to make significant investments in research for America's most expensive disease a reality.

For more information on Alzheimer’s disease and available resources, visit the Alzheimer’s Association at alz.org.

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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