ALZHEIMER’S CAREGIVER TESTIFIES AT SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE HEARING ABOUT UNMET PATIENT NEEDS

- Alzheimer’s Association Statement -

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 15, 2014 – Today, before the Senate Committee on Finance, Mary Margaret Lehmann shared her experience providing care for her husband, Ken Lehmann, who is living with Alzheimer’s disease. The Lehmann’s journey with Alzheimer’s has been long and difficult. After a 10-year period during which they saw four neurologists and three internists and were forced to declare bankruptcy, Ken was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, a fatal disease that currently has no way to stop or even slow its progression.

“About half of the more than five million Americans living with Alzheimer’s disease have not been diagnosed,” says Mary Margaret. “We were given no information on what to expect, how to deal with symptoms or even how to manage other chronic issues with Alzheimer’s, but at least we got a diagnosis. We are the lucky ones.”

Fortunately, the Lehmanns found a doctor experienced in treating people living with Alzheimer’s and worked with the Alzheimer’s Association to develop a plan and strategy to support both Ken and Mary Margaret’s quality of life. According to the Alzheimer’s Association 2014 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures report, there are more than 15 million Americans caring for someone with Alzheimer’s, and the physical and emotional impact on the caregiver’s health costs the nation $9.3 billion a year.

“Through the Alzheimer’s Association, I found a wonderful network of caregiver support groups where we share our experiences, trade strategies and find comfort. With a disease like Alzheimer’s, it is not only the individual who needs care and support but also their care partner,” said Mary Margaret.

Congress must continue to address the chronic care issues around Alzheimer’s disease with the same bipartisan collaboration demonstrated in the passage of the National Alzheimer’s Project Act (P.L. 111-375), which mandated the development of a strategic plan to address the rapidly escalating Alzheimer’s
The most recent update to the *National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease*, released in April 2014 by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is starting that process by taking steps to identify and review measures of high quality dementia care in eight areas: 1) diagnosis, treatment, and care; 2) timeliness and accuracy of diagnostic evaluation; 3) patient and caregiver quality of life; 4) evaluation of behavioral symptoms and comorbid conditions; 5) care coordination; 6) assessment and management of caregiver burden; 7) training and provider knowledge; and 8) patient-centered outcomes and goals of care.

“The Alzheimer’s Association applauds Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Ranking Member Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) for their commitment to chronic care for diseases like Alzheimer’s,” said Robert Egge, Vice President of Public Policy at the Alzheimer’s Association. “Their focus on quality dementia care will help the families currently impacted by the Alzheimer’s crisis while we race toward the goal of the National Alzheimer’s Plan of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer’s disease by 2025.”

For more information on Alzheimer’s disease, 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](http://www.alz.org).

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