

alzheimer's  association
desert southwest chapter
Advocacy E-Newsletter
January 2011



Advocacy is supporting a cause and having your voice heard by someone with the ability to make change. We speak for those who can't speak for themselves.

Greetings fellow Alzheimer's Association advocates, and best wishes for a wonderful new year. We applaud and appreciate your commitment to ending Alzheimer's disease and other dementias!

The past month has been very eventful for our Chapter and our nation. On January 4 President Barack Obama signed into law the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA, S. 3036/H.R. 4689). This is the bill that calls for the federal government to create a national strategic plan that addresses Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, with clear objectives, accountability, and timelines. The bill:

- ✓ Launches a campaign within the federal government to overcome Alzheimer's disease.
- ✓ Establishes an inter-agency Advisory Council to develop with the Secretary of Health and Human Services a coordinated National Alzheimer's Disease Plan.
- ✓ Comprehensively addresses the federal government's efforts on Alzheimer's research, care, institutional services, and home- and community-based programs.
- ✓ Accelerates the development of treatments that would prevent, halt, or reverse the course of Alzheimer's disease.
- ✓ Decreases health disparities by ensuring ethnic and racial populations at higher risk for Alzheimer's receive much-needed care and services.

Without the efforts of Alzheimer's advocates like you to gather support in the US Congress this wonderful outcome would probably not have been achieved. 25,000 emails were sent to President Obama on the first day the National Alzheimer's Advocacy Office requested that advocates send an email asking that the legislation be signed. While advocacy work is often slow and it is sometimes hard to see the result of our labors, as a group we are a mighty force which cannot be ignored.

The deaths and serious injuries of dedicated public servants and people participating in our cherished democracy in Tucson on January 8 hurt us all. We extend our thoughts and well wishes to those who were touched by this sad event. Representative Gabrielle Giffords was one of the cosponsors of the NAPA bill, and we thank her and her staff for their support of people with Alzheimer's disease and their families.

Federal Priorities

The 112th Congress first convened on January 3, 2011. We welcome new Representatives Paul Gosar, Ben Quayle, and David Schweikert in Arizona, and Joe Heck in Nevada. There are currently two federal priorities of the Alzheimer's Association that are still pending:

The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act, S. 1492/H.R. 3286, (ABA), the bill that would authorize allocating \$2 billion per year for Alzheimer's disease research.

HOPE for Alzheimer's Act, S. 3674/H.R. 5926, the bill created to improve detection, diagnosis and care planning for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their families.

Other Federal News

Medicare Annual Wellness Visit

Under the Affordable Care Act (the health care reform law), Medicare will now pay for an annual wellness visit, which includes the creation of a personalized prevention plan and detection of possible cognitive impairment. During the exam the doctor will assess an individual's cognitive function by direct observation, with due consideration of information obtained by way of patient report and concerns raised by family members, friends, caretakers or others. This new benefit began on January 1, 2011. For more information see

<http://www.alz.org/national/documents/MedicareAnnualWellnessVisit.pdf>.

New Congressional Districts

Based upon population shifts noted in the 2010 census, in 2013 Arizona will gain one US Congressional District for a new total of nine, and Nevada will gain one US Congressional District for a new total of four.

State Priorities

In both Arizona and Nevada work continues toward developing Alzheimer's state plans that will help address the escalating care and support needs and associated costs of dementia in each state. In Arizona opportunities for you to actively participate in positively shaping the future for the approximately 100,000 people in the state who have the disease now, the estimated 130,000 people who are expected to have it in 2025, and the countless family members and friends impacted, should be available within the next few months. A call for volunteers to serve on topical workgroups will be issued at that time.

Advocate Training

The next advocate training session will be held next Thursday January 27, 2011 at 6:00 – 8:00 PM Arizona time and 5:00 – 7:00 PM Nevada time. The training session will be delivered by webinar (computer and phone). Topics covered will include the meaning of advocacy, why it's important, concrete public policy changes that have resulted from advocacy, and how you can effectively advocate for people with dementia and their families. Anyone in the chapter area who has a phone and computer available can participate at no charge. Absolutely no political knowledge or experience working with government entities is required. Contact Cathy Griner at 602-528-0545 ext. 229 or at cathy.griner@alz.org to sign up.

Young Advocates

Are you 18-39 years old with a desire to help end this disease and make a difference for people with dementia and their families? Would you enjoy attending social events to meet other young advocates and exchange information? You could be one of the newest members of our active and growing YAAA! (Young Advocates for the Alzheimer's Association) group! For more information please contact us at yaaa.dsw@alz.org, or check out our webpage at http://www.alz.org/dsw/in_my_community_20598.asp.

Advocate Database

A database of people who would like to be paired with an experienced advocate to visit a congressional leader's district office in their area is now available. Please send your name, congressional district, phone number, and email address to Cathy Griner at cathy.griner@alz.org if you are interested so legislator visits in small groups can be arranged. Don't know your state and federal districts and representatives? You can find a complete list at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/findyourreps.xpd>.

IN CLOSING

Next month's e-newsletter will include updates on topics previously reported, news items of note, and more information about how Alzheimer's-related advocacy has positively impacted the lives of people with dementia and their families.

Please see http://alz.org/join_the_cause_advocacy.asp for a variety of information regarding advocacy efforts and results throughout the national organization.

Please call me at 602-528-0545 ext. 229 or send an email to cathy.griner@alz.org if you have any questions or comments, or if you would like to be removed from this email distribution list.

Above all, thank you for your commitment to the fight against Alzheimer's disease and related dementias!

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Please visit us on our website at alz.org/dsw. Thanks!