



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Brittney Robinson**
Community Outreach Specialist
319.294.9699
Brittney.robinson@alz.org

**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION ADVOCATES GO TO STATE CAPITOL TO
FIGHT FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T**

Cedar Rapids, IA – There are currently 69,000 residents in Iowa aged 65 and older battling Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. In less than 15 years, this number is expected to soar to 77,000 people in Iowa. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain and the most common form of dementia. Despite promising scientific advances, there is still no cure. Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States and the 5th leading cause of death in Iowa.

Iowa is experiencing an increase in its older population as the first wave of baby boomers reach 65, the age of greatest risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. Beyond the stigma and disability for the affected person, perhaps more than any other disease, the human toll of Alzheimer's extends to families. In 2009, 106,474 Iowans caring for family members provided an estimated 122 million hours of unpaid care, which represents of value of \$1.4 billion.

On February 7, 2011, advocates from across Iowa will gather at the State Capitol to discuss the implications Alzheimer's disease will have on Iowa if no action is taken. "We must get the attention of the state legislature and use our voice to advocate for those with Alzheimer's and their loved ones," says Brittney Robinson, Community Outreach Specialist for the Alzheimer's Association. "With an aging population, it is crucial to push the state to build a better infrastructure in preparation for the influx of new patients that will enter the system. Pressure is on the state to make the appropriate changes to handle the challenges that Alzheimer's disease will generate here in Iowa."

The first-ever Alzheimer's rally at the Capitol will include messages from Debbie Jones, Alzheimer's Association National Board of Directors, Dr. Mariannette Miller-Meeks,

Head of the Iowa Department of Public Health, Joe Franco, MPS, Alzheimer's Association National Director of Advocacy and Kraig Paulsen, *Speaker of the House (District 35)*.

The Alzheimer's Association encourages Iowans to learn more about Alzheimer's disease, to urge elected leaders to make Alzheimer's disease a policy priority and prepare Iowa for the future of Alzheimer's. Local Alzheimer advocates looking to further their involvement are invited to attend the Iowa Day at the Hill on Monday, February 7, 2011. Registration and additional details can be found at www.alz.org/eci.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support, advocacy, 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/eci.

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