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NEW REPORT SAYS AS MANY AS 131,854 ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS IN IOWA

Cedar Rapids, IA, March 15, 2011 – Alzheimer's disease is heartbreaking experience for both the individual with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. According to the Alzheimer's Association's® *2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report released today, we see the number of people with the disease growing and the number of friends and family who care for them significantly more than previously reported.

Growing Impact of Alzheimer's on Families

In this year's *Facts and Figures* report, we see the number of people with the disease growing and the number of friends and family who care for them significantly more than previously reported. The new report reveals there are more than 131,854 Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers in Iowa, and shedding light on the growing impact of a disease that currently is the sixth-leading cause of death and the only cause of death among the top 10 causes in America without a way to prevent, cure or even slow its progression. In 2010, these caregivers provided 150,154,788 hours of unpaid care valued at \$1,791,346,620.

There are an estimated 5.4 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease, including 69,000 living in Iowa alone. Most people survive an average of four to eight years after a diagnosis, but many can live as long as 20 years with the disease. This prolonged duration often places increasingly intensive care demands on family members and friends who provide care. Most caregivers are family members who take on a tremendous financial, physical and emotional burden to help care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. "Alzheimer's is a significant threat not only for the nation – but also for the people of Iowa," said Kelly Hauer, Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Association East Central Iowa Chapter. "With a rapidly aging population at increased risk for developing Alzheimer's and the number of caregivers growing each year, it will become increasingly important for states to be prepared with dementia-capable support services for people at all stages of the disease."

Alzheimer's Impact on States

Medicaid covers nursing home care and other long-term care services in the community for individuals who can no longer afford to pay for long-term care expenses. Ensuring access to Medicaid for those who need it must remain a priority for states as they deal with the escalating Alzheimer crisis. Average per-person Medicaid payments for beneficiaries aged 65 and older with Alzheimer's and other dementias are nine times higher than Medicaid payments for those without

the disease. While Medicaid costs are \$37 billion today they will climb almost 400 percent by 2050.

At a time when a number of states are facing tremendous budget challenges, the growing Alzheimer's population will strain state budgets further. Alzheimer's has profound implications for future state budgets, and states must prepare now to address the multiple and complex challenges that Alzheimer's poses to individuals, families and state governments, particularly Medicaid. While only 4 percent of the general population will be admitted to a nursing home by age 80, for people with Alzheimer's, 75 percent will be admitted to a nursing home, posing significant economic challenges to state Medicaid budgets.

More than half of the states in the country have developed or are in the process of developing state plans, including Iowa. These plans will be instrumental in assessing the current impact of Alzheimer's on Iowa and outlining what steps Iowa lawmakers must take in the coming years to improve its services and support to Alzheimer's families. "The latest Facts and Figures report shows the significant impact of Alzheimer's disease – on the individual, the family, and state and federal governments," said Hauer. "This is why we urge state policymakers to support assigning responsibility for Alzheimer's disease to the Iowa Department of Public Health to provide state leaders with additional means to decide where resources are needed and how to best utilize them, support policy development, and support planning and evaluation systems to monitor the impact of the disease in Iowa. HF390 will require that action be taken and responsibility be assigned, we hope to the Iowa Department of Public Health."

Importance of Early Detection

Increasing evidence suggests that early diagnosis of Alzheimer's and timely intervention is beneficial, both for people with the disease and their caregivers. Early diagnosis allows affected people, relatives and their caregivers to plan for the future, obtain medical care to manage symptoms and optimize function, and assists Alzheimer's families in taking steps to reduce the risk of accidents requiring further medical care. The new report explores the issue of early detection and outlines the various benefits it provides families, including access to valuable support services and resources and also helping to reduce anxiety among caregivers.

The Alzheimer's Association helps newly diagnosed individuals and their families. The Alzheimer's Association East Central Iowa chapter offers caregiver support groups along with support groups designed for people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and their care partners. The Alzheimer's Association also offers online message boards that allow those newly diagnosed and their families to connect with others who are experiencing the affects of Alzheimer's disease in their own lives. "The Alzheimer's Association is committed to increasing awareness about the importance of early detection and diagnosis," said Hauer. "Our goal is to work with families in the community and connect them to local resources and services that help them to better understand and manage what Alzheimer's disease introduces into their lives. This knowledge can not only be empowering but extremely helpful to the whole family."

The full text of the Alzheimer's Association's *2011 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* can be viewed at www.alz.org.

Alzheimer's Association's Facts and Figures

The *Alzheimer's Association's Facts and Figures* report is a comprehensive compilation of national statistics and information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The report conveys the impact of Alzheimer's on individuals, families, government, and the nation's healthcare system.

Since its 2007 inaugural release, the report has become the most cited source covering the broad spectrum of Alzheimer issues. The *Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report is an official publication of the Alzheimer's Association®.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer 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 disease. For more information, visit www.alz.org/eci.

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