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**LINN COUNTY RESIDENT CHAIRS NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S
ASSOCIATION ADVOCACY FORUM**

(Cedar Rapids, Iowa, February 22, 2010) –Debbie Jones of Cedar Rapids will Chair the 2010 National Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Forum held in Washington, D.C., March 7-9. Jones, a National Alzheimer's Association Board Member and Immediate Past President of the East Central Iowa Chapter has been a volunteer for the organization since 2003. The Action Summit Advocacy Forum, the only Alzheimer-themed event of its kind on Capitol Hill, draws people from all walks of life to speak directly to elected officials about their Alzheimer experience and urge them to act now to change the course of a disease that poses one of the greatest public health threats of our time.

“Today there are as many as 5.3 million Americans living with Alzheimer's and that number is expected to soar to as many as 16 million by 2050,” said Jones. “In Iowa alone, it is estimated that nearly 69,000 residents age 65 and older have Alzheimer's or a related dementia, and as many as 96,292 loved ones caring for them who are dealing with the emotional and financial burden this disease brings.” An exploding epidemic, Alzheimer's has the power to undermine all of our best efforts to control health care costs because of its very real potential to bankrupt Medicare and Medicaid and the retirement security of generations to come.

Alzheimer advocates nationwide will converge in Washington, D.C. to participate in the Advocacy Forum, themed “My Experience, My Voice,” the signature opportunity for attendees to ensure elected officials hear about the unrelenting reality and impact of Alzheimer's directly from their constituents. Joel Schmidt of Robins and Alzheimer's Association East Central Iowa Chapter Board President will also attend the two day event. The Forum will include a candlelight tribute rally, and several sessions that offer an opportunity for those most affected by the disease to share their experience as well as learn about the latest in research and legislative efforts. The event culminates as Schmidt and Jones join other advocates from across the nation to meet directly with legislators on Capitol Hill.

At the completion of the Summit, advocates will be encouraged to take their “Hill experience home” and use the tools and information they learn to educate their local communities and advocate for Alzheimer issues all year around at the local, state and Federal levels. For more about the Alzheimer's Association's Alzheimer Action Summit, visit <http://www.alz.org/summit>.

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. For more information, visit www.alz.org.

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