



The Honorable Gene Green  
United States House of Representatives  
2335 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

April 8, 2009

Dear Representative Green:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research, I would like to thank you for sponsoring the *Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act of 2009* (H.R. 1708) and to offer our support for this legislation. We appreciate your continuing efforts to champion Alzheimer issues as well as your willingness to attend the March 2009 Public Policy Forum dinner to accept the Association's Humanitarian Award. Your presence made this event especially meaningful to the 500 advocates who attended the Forum from all over the country; especially those from Texas.

As you know, phasing out the 24-month waiting period for Medicare coverage for individuals with disabilities and eliminating the waiting period for individuals with life-threatening conditions is critical for people under age 65 with Alzheimer's disease. This population—estimated to include as many as 500,000 Americans—often has difficulty qualifying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Once qualified, they must wait five months to receive their SSDI benefit. Finally, only then do they begin the additional 24 month wait before receiving Medicare. This waiting period has a detrimental and costly impact on the entire family.

Many people under age 65 with Alzheimer's disease who lose their jobs will likely lose their job-related health insurance. Frequently, the individual's spouse or caregiver is forced to quit his or her job to provide needed care, resulting in a loss of health coverage for the entire family. If passed, your bill will help relieve the stress of waiting for health coverage for persons with severe disabilities.

If you would like additional information on Alzheimer's disease, please contact Brenda Sulick, Director of Federal Health Policy at [Brenda.Sulick@alz.org](mailto:Brenda.Sulick@alz.org) or at 202-638-8672. We look forward to working with you and your staff to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Egge", written over a horizontal line.

Robert Egge  
Vice President  
Public Policy & Advocacy