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**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PREVALENCE RATES RISE  
TO MORE THAN FIVE MILLION IN THE UNITED STATES**

***- Someone Develops Alzheimer's Every 72 Seconds, According To New  
Alzheimer's Association Report -***

**Washington, DC, March 20, 2007** – The Alzheimer's Association today reports that in 2007 there are now more than 5 million people in the United States living with Alzheimer's disease. This number includes 4.9 million people over the age of 65 and between 200,000 and 500,000 people under age 65 with early onset Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This is a 10 percent increase from the previous prevalence nationwide estimate of 4.5 million.

The greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's is increasing age, and with 78 million baby boomers beginning to turn 60 last year, it is estimated that someone in America develops Alzheimer's every 72 seconds; by mid-century someone will develop Alzheimer's every 33 seconds.

These new estimates, as well as other data concerning the disease and its effects, are issued today as hundreds of advocates from across the country gather in the nation's capitol for the Alzheimer's Association's annual Public Policy Forum. The report titled, *2007 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*, is being released at a hearing today chaired by Senator Barbara Mikulski. Senators Barbara Mikulski and Christopher Bond and Representatives Edward Markey and Christopher Smith have introduced bipartisan legislation to address problems identified in the Association's report. The Association's report details the escalation of Alzheimer's disease which now is the seventh leading cause of death in the country and the fifth leading cause of death for those over age 65. It also offers numerous statistics that convey the burden that Alzheimer's imposes on individuals, families, state and federal governments, businesses, and the nation's health care system. For example:

- Without a cure or effective treatments to delay the onset or progression of the Alzheimer's, the prevalence could soar to 7.7 million people with the disease by 2030, which is more than the population of 140 of the 236 United Nations countries.
- By mid-century, the number of people with Alzheimer's is expected to grow to as many as 16 million, more than the current total population of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston combined.
- As the prevalence impact of Alzheimer's grows, so does the cost to the nation. The direct and indirect costs of Alzheimer's and other dementias amount to more than \$148 billion annually, which is more than the annual sales of any retailer in the world excluding Wal-Mart.

*“Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures* clearly shows the tremendous impact this disease is having on the nation; and with the projected growth of the disease, the collective impact on individuals, families, Medicare, Medicaid, and businesses will be even greater,” says Harry Johns, President and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association. “However there is hope. There are currently nine drugs in Phase III clinical trials for Alzheimer’s several of which show great promise to slow or stop the progression of the disease. This, combined with advancements in diagnostic tools, has the potential to change the landscape of Alzheimer’s.”

According to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 2000-2004 death rates have declined for most major diseases -- heart disease (-8 percent), breast cancer (-2.6 percent), prostate cancer (-6.3 percent) and stroke (-10.4 percent), while Alzheimer’s disease deaths continue to trend upward, increasing 33 percent during that period.

“We must make the fight against Alzheimer’s a national priority before it’s too late. The absence of effective disease modifying drugs, coupled with an aging population, makes Alzheimer’s *the* health care crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” Johns said.

Medicare currently spends nearly three times as much for people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias than for the average Medicare beneficiary. Medicare costs are projected to double from \$91 billion in 2005 to more than \$189 billion by 2015, more than the current gross national product of 86 percent of the world’s countries. In 2005, state and federal Medicaid spending for nursing home and home care for people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias was estimated at \$21 billion; that number is projected to increase to \$27 billion by 2015.

The new report also highlights the impact that Alzheimer’s has on states with more than 6 in 10 (62%) having double digit growth in prevalence by the end of the decade. In addition, Alaska (+47%), Colorado (+47%), Utah (+45%), Wyoming (+43%), Nevada (+38%), Idaho (+37%), Oregon (+33%), and Washington (+33%) will experience increases ranging from one-third to one-half. The states with the largest numbers of deaths due to Alzheimer’s disease in 2003 were (1) California, (2) Florida, (3) Texas, (4) Pennsylvania, and (5) Ohio.

The Alzheimer’s Association is the first and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to finding prevention methods, treatments and an eventual cure for Alzheimer’s. For more than 25 years, the Association has provided reliable information and care consultation; created services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes.

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NOTE: The full text of 2007 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures can be viewed at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)