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ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE STUDY GROUP
- Alzheimer's Association Statement -

Washington, DC (July 11, 2007) –To address the escalating epidemic Alzheimer's disease poses to the nation, today the co-chairs of the Alzheimer's Disease Congressional Task Force and the Alzheimer's Association welcomed the creation of an Alzheimer's Disease Study Group. Chaired by Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Former Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, this independent, non-partisan group, will evaluate the nation's current effort to combat Alzheimer's disease which now affects more than 5 million people in the United States and develop recommendations for the public and private sectors to address the problem in the future.

Alzheimer's Disease Needs to Be a National Priority

Today, the cost of AD and other dementias to Medicare and Medicaid plus the indirect cost to business including absenteeism and lost productivity exceeds \$148 billion annually. Experts predict that by 2030, Medicare spending on those with Alzheimer's alone, will cost nearly \$400 billion – roughly equivalent to today's entire Medicare budget. The Alzheimer's Disease Study Group will play a key role in identifying and assessing the scope and magnitude of the disease and is charged with offering viable solutions and approaches to lessen the human and economic costs of the disease.

The facts, according to the Alzheimer's Association's *2007 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* are staggering:

- Alzheimer's is not normal aging, it is a progressive and fatal disease.
- One out of eight people age 65 and older have Alzheimer's and nearly one out of every two over age 85 has it.
- There are approximately 500,000 American's younger than age 65 with Alzheimer's or another dementia.
- Alzheimer's is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.
- Today Medicare costs for a person with Alzheimer's are almost three times higher than the average for all beneficiaries.
- Total Medicare spending for beneficiaries with Alzheimer's is projected to double from \$91 billion in 2005 to \$189 billion in 2015.
- Ten million caregivers are providing 8.5 billion hours of care valued at \$83 billion dollars.

The Association applauds the formation of the Alzheimer's Disease Study Group. The personal and economic impact of Alzheimer's is so large that no one entity can solve the problem alone. It will require all levels of government and the private sector working together to address the problem.

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