



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATE POLICYMAKERS URGED TO PREPARE  
FOR EMERGING ALZHEIMER EPIDEMIC**  
*Alzheimer's Association Statement*

**Washington, D.C., December 4, 2008** – The Alzheimer's Association® applauds the Council of State Governments (CSG) in its effort to inform state legislators about cognitive impairment and the emerging Alzheimer epidemic. For 75 years, CSG has helped leaders in all branches of state government by providing information on emerging and evolving trends, their implications for state governments and potential policy solutions. By educating state policymakers and providing them with various policy initiatives to address the escalating Alzheimer crisis, CSG demonstrates its understanding of the broad human and economic threat Alzheimer's disease poses to state legislatures nationwide.

By 2010, there will be nearly a half million new cases of Alzheimer's disease a year; and by 2050, there will be almost one million new cases each year. Alzheimer's doesn't just impact individuals; it also cripples families who quickly can become overwhelmed by the caregiving demands of the disease. Nearly 10 million Alzheimer caregivers devote 8.4 billion hours of their time to provide unpaid care valued at nearly \$90 billion.

As many as 5.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, a fatal, degenerative disease that has no cure. With an aging baby boomer population, as many as 16 million people will have Alzheimer's by midcentury and the nation cannot afford an Alzheimer epidemic. CSG's recognition of the burden an Alzheimer crisis would pose on state systems of health and long-term care is significant. By identifying innovative and effective responses for state policymakers to consider today, the challenges of an emerging Alzheimer population can sufficiently be addressed tomorrow.

Experts agree our nation must act now to confront Alzheimer's, and CSG has provided state legislators with a broad array of policy instruments to begin this action. CSG recommendations for state legislators include: creating and implementing Alzheimer state action plans and supporting proposals to institute or expand dementia training for all paid direct and indirect care staff in all care settings. CSG also recommends the inclusion of cognitive impairment questions in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), an annual survey conducted by each state that gathers and tracks information about health conditions.

The Alzheimer's Association is committed to continued collaboration with CSG and other national organizations of state officials in addressing the challenges of a growing Alzheimer population.

**NOTE:** The full text of the Council of State Governments document on Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's Disease can be viewed at <http://www.healthystates.csg.org/>

**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](http://www.alz.org).

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