



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**THE DEATH OF SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA)
- Alzheimer's Association Statement -**

Washington, DC (August 26, 2009) – The Alzheimer's Association was saddened to learn of the death of Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy (D-MA), a true health care champion who has left an indelible mark on the American political landscape. For nearly a half century, he helped to worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Americans. In no arena was this more greatly felt than his efforts in working to provide access to health care all Americans.

As head of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Senator Kennedy understood the importance of developing comprehensive strategies and policies that address the needs of aging Americans who suffer from chronic conditions, including Alzheimer's disease. As it stands today, our current long-term care system is dangerously unprepared and ill-equipped to meet the needs of an aging baby boomer population and Senator Kennedy valiantly led the charge that the nation's long-term care crisis must be addressed now, before 78 million baby boomers need long-term services.

According to the Alzheimer's Association's *2009 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*, today there are more than 5 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease and this number is expected to grow to as many as 16 million by mid-century. People with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are high users of health and long-term care services. Few Alzheimer families can afford to pay for long-term care services for the duration needed and most families exhaust their own resources to pay for their loved ones' care. By championing the *Community Living Assistance Supports and Services (CLASS) Act (S. 697/H.R. 1721)*, Senator Kennedy exhibited his unique understanding of how important is it to explore other revenue streams and financing mechanisms that make long-term care affordable in order to lessen the overwhelming pressure and financial burden on families and safety-net programs, especially Medicaid.

Individuals who are cognitively impaired must have access to the critical long-term care services and supports to allow them to maintain their independence and keep them at home with their families for as long as possible. Kennedy understood that steps must also be taken to ensure individuals don't have to impoverish themselves to qualify for much needed assistance.

With his unmatched and distinguished history of public service, Senator Kennedy's absence will be felt by all. His significant contributions to the nation will continue to benefit all Americans, including those with Alzheimer's disease, for years to come.

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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