



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**SHORING UP HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE
FOR EMERGING ALZHEIMER POPULATION**
Alzheimer's Association Statement

Washington, D.C., May 22, 2009 – As the leading research and advocacy organization for Alzheimer's Disease, the Alzheimer's Association commends Senators Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) for recognizing the grave threat the healthcare workforce shortage poses to the nation's ability to care for America's older adult population and offering the *Caring for an Aging America Act (S. 750)*.

Today there are 5.3 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease. By 2010, there will be almost a half million new cases of Alzheimer's disease each year; and by 2050, there will be almost a million new cases each year. Alzheimer's disease will clearly require a significant portion of future healthcare workforce needs. As it stands today, healthcare staffing needs threaten to go unmet and underserved as America faces unparalleled demands for health services in its aging population.

From licensed health professionals to direct care workers, all will need enhanced training and education in geriatrics and gerontology to meet the unique needs of older Americans living with dementia. The *Caring for an Aging America Act* calls for \$130 million in federal funding over a five year period to attract and retain trained health care professionals and direct-care workers by providing them with loan forgiveness and other career advancement opportunities.

The legislation offered by Senators Boxer and Collins provides a significant first step in addressing the health and long term care needs of a growing Alzheimer population. The Alzheimer's Association remains committed to working with Congress to ensure that all efforts are made to recruit and train healthcare workers who are committed to providing the best care possible for America's older adults. The Association urges members of Congress to co-sponsor and pass this important legislation.

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.

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