

Development of State Alzheimer's Disease Plan for California

The Alzheimer's Association and the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) will provide the leadership for a public-private partnership to develop a state plan for Alzheimer's disease. The process will engage a broad range of stakeholders at both treetop and grassroots levels. We will implement strategies to maximize input from individuals, including those diagnosed with Alzheimer's; families; health professionals; and service providers across the state, in rural as well as ethnically diverse areas.

With support from CHHS and the Alzheimer's Association and funding from four private foundations, the CHHS' Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Advisory Committee will organize and convene a Task Force in August 2009 to guide plan development and to include stakeholders not represented on the Advisory Committee, including all sectors of the provider community, people in the early stage of Alzheimer's, and racially and ethnically diverse communities. The Advisory Committee works closely with CHHS and is charged in state law to advise the administration and the legislature. The Advisory Committee will provide direction to the Task Force on policy focus, structure and process. The Task Force will review program, service and policy needs; create subcommittees to focus policy review; and develop recommendations to the Alzheimer's Advisory Committee that will enable the state to prepare for the expected epidemic of Alzheimer's disease.

The subcommittees, which will meet three times, will each focus on an issue area and invite participation from experts and stakeholders who are needed to contribute to discussion, review, analyses and recommendation development. Pursuant to the provisions of SB 491 (Alquist, Chapter 339 of 2008), policy focus will include but not be limited to: (1) community-based support for California's diverse people with Alzheimer's disease and their family members; (2) choices for care and residence for persons with Alzheimer's disease and their families involving the full spectrum of community, residential and nursing facility care; (3) a public health and integrated care management approach to Alzheimer's care in health care settings that makes full use of best dementia-care practices; (4) competence of health care professionals in diagnosing and treating patients with dementia; and (5) early identification and intervention through increased public awareness of Alzheimer's disease. Subcommittees will report to the Task Force.

The Task Force will convene five community meetings throughout the state to gather input about current experiences, challenges, and solution strategies from a broad population, including hard-to-reach populations in rural areas and different racial/ethnic groups. On-line surveys will be developed to capture greater input from the public, particularly families living with the disease. Subcommittee work and plan recommendations will be informed by a written record of these meetings and surveys.

The Alzheimer's Association will engage high profile California business, health, religious and political leaders as members of a Blue Ribbon Panel to support State Plan development. Blue Ribbon Panel members will be engaged from the time of the launch of plan development through the years following the recommendations. Their purpose will be to increase awareness of the need for the Plan, to enhance implementation of the Plan's recommendations, and to be advocates for long-term policy change.

The plan and recommendations will be completed by the end of 2010. In early 2011 a series of policy briefings will be held to communicate findings to the new Governor, Legislature and other policy makers and leaders. The purpose will be to build leadership to implement the recommendations.