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Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement Statement on the Better Care Reconciliation Act

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 23, 2017 – The Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) are deeply concerned by provisions in the proposed health care reform bill released in the Senate. While the legislation may not be intended to reduce support for the millions of vulnerable seniors with Alzheimer's or other dementias who rely on Medicaid services, this will nevertheless be its effect.

Alzheimer's is a national health crisis. Today, there are more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease and over 15 million providing care. These are staggering numbers that are set to triple within a generation. And, Alzheimer's is the only leading cause of death in the U.S. that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed. It is imperative that those living with this already overwhelming disease have access to quality care.

These proposed cuts to Medicaid are potentially devastating for this highly vulnerable population given the absence of offsetting provisions to safeguard the continuity of vital care and support services. Alzheimer's is progressive and fatal. In its later stages, those who have the disease require an extraordinarily high level of hands-on care. Today, more than 1 in 4 seniors with Alzheimer's and other dementias are on Medicaid. Medicaid is the only public program that covers the long-term nursing home stays that most people with dementia require in the late stages of the disease. Medicaid also covers home and community-based services which are critical for people with dementia, particularly in the early and middle stages of the disease.

We also have serious concerns about the impact of this legislation on Americans living with pre-existing conditions, including the 200,000 Americans living with younger-onset Alzheimer's. The Alzheimer's Association and AIM strongly urge the Senate to ensure meaningful protections are in place for individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias to have continued access to affordable health care.

Until the millions of Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementias have access to effective treatments and means of prevention, it is especially important that they have access to the quality care and support resources that the disease requires. As the legislative process continues, we will continue to work with Congress to protect the needs and address the huge challenges of these vulnerable constituents.

Alzheimer's Association[®]

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's 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 alz.org.

Alzheimer's Impact Movement

The Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization working in strategic partnership with the Alzheimer's Association. AIM advocates for policies to overcome Alzheimer's disease, including increased investment in research, improved care and support, and development of approaches to reduce the risk of developing dementia. For more information, visit alzimpact.org.

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