

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you today as co-chairs of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease to request that you include adequate funding to help change the trajectory of Alzheimer's disease in the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2016. Specifically, we urge you to call for an additional \$200 million to be allocated to the National Institute of Aging to boost our investment in Alzheimer's research.

As you are aware, Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that exacts a tremendous personal and economic toll on the individual, the family and our society. In addition to the human suffering it causes, Alzheimer's cost the United States \$214 billion in 2014, including \$150 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. That price tag will increase exponentially as the baby boom generation ages, placing our country not only in a public health crisis, but an economic one as well. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that, without new treatments or a cure, Alzheimer's will cost the United States an astonishing \$1 trillion by 2050.

While Alzheimer's is costing the United States more than \$200 billion, we are spending less than three tenths of one percent of that amount—an estimated \$566 million in FY 2014—on research to prevent and cure this disease. It is undeniable that Alzheimer's receives funding that is disproportionate to its human and economic toll. Indeed, several similarly deadly diseases receive annual funding of between \$2 and \$5 billion for research, with some receiving even more. Surely, we can do more for Alzheimer's given the tremendous price of this devastating disease.

The Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY 2014 took an important step forward by providing for a \$100 million increase at the National Institute of Aging to help boost the commitment to Alzheimer's research. However, the Chairman of the Advisory Council established by the bipartisan 2010 National Alzheimer's Project Act says that we will need to devote \$2 billion a year to Alzheimer's research to reach the goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025.

Accordingly, we believe that an increase in resources for Alzheimer's research is both necessary and a smart investment that will lower future government spending. Similar investments in research for other diseases have yielded tremendous results: patients have access to new treatments, and death rates are decreasing. At the same time, mortality due to

Alzheimer's is escalating dramatically, and it is unique among the top ten causes of death in that it cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.

That said, there is promising research in the pipeline that holds great hope for Alzheimer's patients and their families. The research community is poised to make important contributions toward the treatment of this disease through clinical trials and by investigating new therapeutic targets if adequate resources are available.

For these reasons, we urge you to call for an additional \$200 million in Alzheimer's research in the coming fiscal year and work with us to develop a plan to meet our ultimate goal of a \$2 billion annual investment within the next five years.

We know that you share our commitment to effectively preventing and treating Alzheimer's by 2025 and we look forward to working with you to meet that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H SMITH
Co-Chair
Congressional Task Force
on Alzheimer's Disease



MAXINE WATERS
Co-Chair
Congressional Task Force
on Alzheimer's Disease

cc: The Honorable Sylvia Burwell, Secretary of Health and Human Resources
The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education