



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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U.S. Reps. Smith, Waters Mark National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Memory Screening Month

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Maxine Waters (D-CA), House Co-Chairs of the Bipartisan, Bicameral Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, thanked the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) for hosting free, confidential memory screenings and praised them for increasing the duration to throughout National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month in November.

“The screenings offered by the AFA are incredibly important in helping our seniors make healthcare decisions,” said Smith. **“We will continue our effective collaboration between the Alzheimer's Task Force and the AFA as this working relationship has been key in raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, helping to eliminate the stigma with which they are all too often associated and providing needed resources to hundreds of thousands annually.”**

“National Memory Screening Month is an excellent opportunity for individuals with memory concerns to get free and confidential screenings for Alzheimer's disease and other problems affecting memory,” said Waters. “It is also an opportunity to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease and promote the benefits of memory screening and early detection.”

AFA has hosted its National Memory Screening initiative during National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month for the past 13 years. This year, the program has expanded to the entire month of November, during which sites across the country, including the entire Kmart Pharmacy chain, will offer free, confidential memory screenings to the public, as well as patient education about brain health and successful aging.

To find the screening site closest to you enter your zip code here: <http://www.afascreenings.org/>.

Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative condition caused by a disease of the brain, is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. While Alzheimer's currently has no cure, early detection can help patients and caregivers plan for more positive health outcomes.

“Memory screenings are a significant first step toward detection of memory problems,” said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. “Some memory problems can be readily treated, such as those caused by vitamin deficiencies or thyroid problems. Other memory problems may result from causes that are not currently reversible, such as

Alzheimer's disease. There are many benefits to early detection of memory problems. If a memory problem turns out to be Alzheimer's disease, an individual living with the disease can have an opportunity to participate in long-term care, legal and financial planning discussions with their families, and obtain social services support."

Memory screenings are not used to diagnose illness, but are an indicator to determine whether a person might benefit from further examination by a qualified physician. In addition to helping patients avoid or correct misdiagnosis and other medical problems, memory screenings benefit persons with healthy memory scores by dispelling fears, providing a baseline for future screenings and promoting healthy aging.

"Early detection of Alzheimer's disease expands options for care and treatment and helps individuals and families plan for their future," said Waters. "I congratulate the Alzheimer's Foundation of America for organizing National Memory Screening Month."

"I highly encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity for a free, confidential memory screening this month," said Smith. "Knowledge is power, and in addition to providing earlier and more accurate diagnoses, memory screenings offer insight into brain health which improves quality of life for all."

For additional information on Alzheimer's disease and memory screenings, visit:
www.nationalmemoryscreening.org.

Smith and Waters teamed up in the 114th Congress to introduce Alzheimer's Action Now, a package of four bills that together aim to help Alzheimer's patients and their families; promote public awareness of Alzheimer's disease; and encourage voluntary contributions to research efforts. The Alzheimer's Action Now legislative package includes three bills introduced by Rep. Waters: The Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Act (H.R. 3090), The Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3091), and the Alzheimer's Disease Semipostal Stamp Act (H.R. 3092). The package also includes the Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education (HOPE) for Alzheimer's Act (H.R. 1559) introduced by Rep. Smith.

The Task Force co-chairs also requested an increase in funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), specifically targeted for Alzheimer's disease in fiscal year 2017. Their efforts were recognized by the Appropriations Committee in the House, which approved a budget that included a \$350 million boost at NIH for Alzheimer's research, for a total of \$1.34 billion to continue the search for an Alzheimer's treatment and cure.

Smith co-authored the bipartisan National Alzheimer's Project Act or NAPA, which passed the House in 2010 and was enacted in 2011. NAPA set a goal of preventing and successfully treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025 and established a national plan to coordinate government and private sector research as well as improve care and support services for patients and families.

Click here to read the [national plan](#).

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