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ALZHEIMER'S CASES EXPECTED TO INCREASE 26% IN TEXAS BY 2010

New Higher Disease Projections Released This Week Translate Into Human/Economic Losses for Texas Families and Businesses—Making New Research Funding Critical

AUSTIN, TX. – Leading scientists with the Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium today said the need for state-funded Alzheimer's research gained greater urgency with the release of new higher cost estimates for the future human and economic impacts of Alzheimer's on Texas and the nation.

To account for an aging Baby Boomer population, the national Alzheimer's Association increased its disease projections this week by 10 percent—estimating that more than 5 million people nationwide are living with Alzheimer's, with new cases being diagnosed at the rate of one every 72 seconds.

"Our state must increase its investment in Alzheimer's research if we are to have any chance of reducing the devastating impact of this terrible disease," said **Representative Sylvester Turner, Speaker Pro Tempore of the House.**

"I'm just one of many state legislators who have seen Alzheimer's up close because we have a loved one, in my case – my mother, who is suffering from this disease."

By 2050, the number of people with Alzheimer's is expected to grow to as many as 16 million, more than the total population of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston combined.

In Texas, where state lawmakers are currently considering an increase in state-funded Alzheimer's research, the new revised projections are sobering:

- Texas ranks 3rd among the 50 states (behind California and Florida) in the number of estimated Alzheimer's cases—currently affecting more than 200,000 Texans and their families. That number is expected to more than double to more than 500,000 cases by 2025.
- Texas ranks 3rd among the 50 states in the largest number of deaths (4,015) due to Alzheimer's disease for the most recent documented year (2003).
- An estimated 690,000 Texans are spending a projected 595 million uncompensated hours caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's.
- The dollar value of this uncompensated care is \$5.8 billion—ranking Texas 2nd among the 50 states in the economic impact of Alzheimer's care on families.
- With seven of 10 Alzheimer's patients cared for at home, the annual cost to American business is projected at \$61 billion in health care coverage and lost productivity—and based on Texas' share of the population, the cost to Texas business is \$7.2 billion.

"We are fortunate in Texas to have a Legislature that, two years ago, made history by approving the first state funding (\$2 million) for Alzheimer's research and are considering doubling that commitment in 2007," said **Jim Hinds**, Project Coordinator for the **Texas Alzheimer's Research Consortium.**

These four major research institutions are members of the Consortium: **Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, and University of North Texas Health Science Center.**

Dr. Roger Rosenberg, Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center at UT Southwestern, said the Consortium's focus on identifying "risk genes" and biomarkers contributing to Alzheimer's onset could lead to the development of drugs "to begin the end of Alzheimer's disease in our lifetime."

The Consortium institutions have used state funds to create a shared database of genetic and blood/tissue data from 500 Alzheimer's patients and 100 controls being recruited from across Texas.

Dr. Stephen Waring, the Consortium's research epidemiologist and lead scientist, said the state's providing \$4 million in Alzheimer's research funding over the next two years would allow the Consortium to add new research subjects and fund research into a genetic explanation for the rate of change in Alzheimer's disease and, potentially, links between Alzheimer's and such factors as hormones, depression, and inflammation.

"It would position Texas as a leader in Alzheimer's research and allow us to leverage state dollars to attract external funding," Waring said.

Senator Jane Nelson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services, said additional state Alzheimer's research funding is needed. "My mother suffered from Alzheimer's at the end of her life. Until you live it, you cannot imagine the cruelty of the disease."

Alzheimer's is now the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. and the fifth leading cause of death for those over age 65.

According to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, death rates for most major diseases have declined from 2000-2004: heart disease (-8 percent), breast cancer (-2.6 percent), prostate cancer (-6.3 percent) and stroke (-10.4 percent). In contrast, Alzheimer's disease deaths increased 33 percent during that same four-year period.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION AND COMMENT:

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