



March 31, 2014

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S. 128 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S. 128 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Mikulski and Harkin and Ranking Members Shelby and Moran:

On behalf of the 500,000 Americans who die with Alzheimer's each year, the many millions of Americans battling Alzheimer's disease and related disorders today and their family caregivers – as well as the tens of millions of more who stand to develop this dreadful disease in the years ahead – we write to thank you for your leadership to stop this crisis and urge you to continue demonstrating this commitment as you assemble the Fiscal Year 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Our organizations strongly support the recommendation of leading scientists and of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care and Services that, in order to achieve the national goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025, we must commit to ramp up Alzheimer's research investments to a minimum of \$2 billion annually. We recognize that an adequately funded National Institutes of Health (NIH) is paramount to achieving this goal and **enthusiastically support funding NIH at \$32 billion in FY 2015**, the amount that would fully restore the FY 13 sequestration cuts and address medical inflation.

Additionally, to achieve this \$2 billion amount near-term, **we support the aggressive ramp-up called for by the Advisory Council and recommend providing sufficient funds to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support a doubling of the current level. Recognizing the challenges facing the committee, we urge that we not lose ground from the progress made in recent years and that, at a minimum, you provide a year-over-year funding increase to support at least \$200 million of additional Alzheimer's research from FY 2014.**

The health and economic challenges posed by Alzheimer’s are massive and grave. Just a few weeks ago, a research team led by Rush University in Chicago published a groundbreaking new report pegging the annual number of deaths attributable to Alzheimer’s and dementia at more than 500,000 – six times the amount previously estimated. This development makes Alzheimer’s the nation’s third leading cause of death behind only heart disease and cancer. Additionally, data released last year from the RAND Center for the Study of Aging has made clear the impact of Alzheimer’s on our nation’s economy with the disease estimated to cost in excess of \$200 billion annually – about 70 percent of which is borne by Medicare and Medicaid. If the current trajectory does not change, Alzheimer’s threatens to cost the nation more than \$1 trillion each year by mid-century.

These statistics demonstrate that we do not have a choice as to whether or not we will pay for Alzheimer’s. We are paying – dearly – today in the form of added healthcare costs and caregiving burdens, and will pay dramatically more unless we obtain breakthroughs in research that will lead to developing disease-modifying treatments and prevention strategies. We have a \$200 billion problem on our hands but commit only \$560 million – about one-third of one percent – toward efforts to solve it, an imbalance we must change and that you have laid a foundation to address.

Thanks to the increased support for Alzheimer’s that Congress provided in the FY 14 budget, the NIH – primarily through the National Institute on Aging while spanning many other institutes including the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) – is supporting a number of cutting-edge Alzheimer’s research projects. These include late-stage clinical studies seeking to determine if the disease can be “prevented” by administering medications far earlier in the disease process before symptoms of the disease emerge. Alzheimer’s is also one of three diseases selected for the new Accelerating Medicines Partnership (AMP), a groundbreaking public-private partnership designed to accelerate the therapy development process. Yet, at the same time, the amount of meritorious research being proposed by our nation’s research scientists far exceeds available funding, underscoring the need for a robust commitment to Alzheimer’s biomedical research by the NIH.

In addition to increasing funding available for Alzheimer’s research at NIH, we would also request that you continue supporting those patients and caregivers battling the disease today. Multiple studies have demonstrated the negative impact of Alzheimer’s and dementia on the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of family caregivers. Thankfully, The Administration on Community Living (ACL) supports a number of programs intended to support caregivers and increase awareness and understanding of the disease. To ensure these programs can reach more families in need, **we request that you increase funding for the ACL’s Alzheimer’s programs by \$25 million in FY 15.** Following is a breakdown of our FY 15 request compared to the FY 14 funding levels:

<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 14 Omnibus</b>	<b>FY 15 Request</b>
National Family Caregiver Services Program	\$146 million	\$156 million
Lifespan Respite Care Program	\$2 million	\$10 million
Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative	\$11 million	\$12 million
Alzheimer’s Disease Communications Campaign	\$4 million	\$5 million
Alzheimer’s Disease Demonstration Grants	\$4 million	\$9 million

We thank you for your past support and appreciate the challenges you must navigate as you assemble your bill. But we remain resolute in urging that you maximize the likelihood of us achieving the national goal of stopping Alzheimer's by 2025 by allocating, at a minimum, sufficient funding to support a year-over-year increase of at least \$200 million for Alzheimer's research at the NIH in FY 2015. Taking this action will demonstrate that Congress and our nation are serious about achieving the 2025 goal and move us a step closer to realizing it.

Sincerely,



George Vradenburg  
Chairman  
USAagainstAlzheimer's



Sue Peschin  
CEO  
Alliance for Aging Research



Ian Kremer  
Executive Director  
Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease



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