

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2017

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

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 is our nation's most expensive disease, costing the United States more than \$236 billion a year, including \$160 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. These costs will skyrocket as the baby boom generation ages.

Alzheimer's is also one of our nation's leading causes of death, with recent data revealing that each year more than 500,000 deaths are attributable to Alzheimer's and other dementias – six times the amount previously estimated. Moreover, Alzheimer's is the only one of our nation's deadliest diseases without an effective means of prevention, treatment, or cure.

If nothing is done to change the trajectory of Alzheimer's, the number of Americans afflicted with the disease is expected to more than triple by 2050. Already our nation's costliest disease, Alzheimer's is projected to cost our country more than \$1 trillion by 2050.

At a time when the United States is spending more than \$200 billion a year to care for Alzheimer's patients, we are spending just four percent of that amount on research. Although the Administration and Congress have made some progress in increasing funding, Alzheimer's research funding remains disproportionately low compared to its human and economic toll. Indeed, similarly deadly diseases receive annual funding of \$2 billion, \$3 billion, and even \$5.6 billion for research, which has paid dividends. Given the tremendous human and economic price of this devastating disease, we can do more for Alzheimer's.

Investments in research for other diseases have yielded tremendous results: patients have access to new treatments, and death rates for some diseases are decreasing. Yet, at the same time, mortality due to Alzheimer's is escalating dramatically. Fortunately, there is promising research that holds hope for Alzheimer's patients and their families. The research community is poised to make important advances through clinical trials and investigating new therapeutic targets, but adequate funding is critical to advance this research.

The National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease, which was authorized by the bipartisan 2010 National Alzheimer's Project Act, has as its primary goal to "prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025." To meet that goal, the Chairman of the Advisory Council created by the legislation says that we will need to devote \$2 billion a year to

Alzheimer's research. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 took a major step forward by providing a \$350 million increase for Alzheimer's disease research funding, the largest increase for Alzheimer's research funding in history. Congress has recently taken additional steps to fight Alzheimer's with the enactment of the 21st Century Cures Act, which provides additional funding for the BRAIN Initiative and creates the breakthrough EUREKA prize competition to address pressing diseases, including Alzheimer's. These are critical achievements, but we need to do more.

Increasing federal funding for Alzheimer's research would be a wise investment. We, therefore, urge you to boost our current investment in Alzheimer's research in your fiscal year 2018 budget request and support efforts to meet the research investment objective set forth in the National Plan.

We remain committed to finding a way to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's by 2025, and we look forward to working with you to meet that goal.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



John Boozman  
United States Senator



Mark Warner  
United States Senator



Roger Wicker  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

*Thom Tillis*

Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

*Sheldon Whitehouse*

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

*Bill Cassidy, M.D.*

Bill Cassidy  
United States Senator

*Bob Casey, Jr.*

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator