

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 28, 2016

The President
The White House
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 \$226 billion a year, including \$153 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 between 2015 and 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. Surely, we can do more for Alzheimer's given the tremendous human and economic price of this devastating disease.

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 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 takes 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. This is a critical achievement. We believe, however, that we need to do more.

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.

We believe that increasing our nation's spending on 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 2017 budget request and ask that you work with us to support efforts to meet the research investment objective set forth in the National Plan.

We know that you share our commitment to finding a way to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's by 2025. Thank you for your efforts, and we look forward to working with you to meet that goal.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins

Amy Klobuchar

Jerry Moran

Edward J. Markey

Kelly A. Ayotte

Mark R. Warner

Barbara Mikulski

Shirley

Rebbie Stivers