



February 28, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid,

We, the undersigned members of the Alzheimer's-serving research and care giving community, write in support of maintaining or increasing funding levels for the National Institutes of Health in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

As the Senate begins considering its version of a Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011, we urge you, at a minimum, to maintain the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding at the FY 2010 level. The NIH is an engine for curing disease, extending life and reducing the cost of health care. NIH is conducting vital research to find the causes and potential cures for Alzheimer's and the other aging-related diseases that are driving the rapidly-rising costs of Medicare and Medicaid. It is precisely because of the fiscal challenges the nation is facing that, at a minimum, this funding be maintained at FY 10 levels.

According to the National Institute on Aging as many as 5.1 million Americans currently have Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately, the federal commitment is nowhere near the investment required by the scope and the scale of the challenge that Alzheimer's disease presents. In 2010, Alzheimer's disease care costs were estimated at \$172 billion, while the federal investment at the NIH in Alzheimer's disease research was less than \$500 million. This unsustainable imbalance in public health cost versus cost-avoiding investment will increase dramatically in the coming decades as our nation's baby boomers enter their Medicare-eligible years. Consider that Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions suffering from Alzheimer's cost three times as much as those without Alzheimer's. Similarly, Medicaid spends nine times as much to care for patients with Alzheimer's because of the institutionalization caused by Alzheimer's-caused cognitive impairment. The nation has two choices – invest in promising research today, or pay a far, far greater bill for the cost of care tomorrow. We have no other choice.

The broad bi-partisan support enjoyed by the National Alzheimer's Project Act, which became law late last year, recognized the grave and growing challenge of Alzheimer's to the nation's health and financial future. We respectfully urge that the fiscal challenges we confront require a bipartisan

response to the growing cost of caring for our Medicare and Medicaid populations by maintaining, at a minimum, the fiscal year 2010 funding level for the NIH.

The letter was organized by USAgainstAlzheimer's and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, two conveners of Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer's Disease (LEAD), a coalition of Alzheimer's-serving organizations committed to increasing America's commitment to stop Alzheimer's disease.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Sally Sachar, Executive Director of USAgainstAlzheimer's at (202) 360-2043 or ssachar@usagainstalzhimers.org or Sue Peschin, Vice President of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, at 202-466-0590 or speschin@alzfdn.org.

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