

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

For Immediate Release
July 11, 2007

Contacts:
Clinton Press Office, 202-224-2243
Kevin Kelley (Collins), 202-224-2523
Jessica Schafer (Markey), 202-225-2836
Patrick Creamer (Smith), 202-225-3765
Melissa Schwartz (Mikulski), 202-228-1122
Mark Williams (Burr), 202-224-3154

**CONGRESSIONAL TASK FORCE ON ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE WELCOMES
FORMATION OF NEW EXPERT STUDY GROUP**

Washington, DC -- Today, the co-chairs of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease – Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Susan Collins (R-ME), and Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) – welcomed the formation of the Alzheimer's Disease Study Group, a new independent, non-partisan panel that will join efforts to advance the cause of Alzheimer's prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. They were joined by Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Richard Burr (R-NC), leadership of the Alzheimer's Association and the co-chairs of the new study group Newt Gingrich and Bob Kerrey.

"Today is an opportunity to build on our commitment to finding solutions for all the challenges posed by Alzheimer's Disease," said Senator Clinton. "From discovering the underlying causes and developing a cure, to improving the long-term care of those suffering from this disease and helping their caregivers cope with the physical, emotional and mental challenges, we need to keep pressing for progress."

"Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that takes a tremendous personal and economic toll on both the individual and the family," commented Senator Collins. "I am pleased that this study group is being created with the goal of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of our nation's current efforts to combat Alzheimer's Disease and identify strategies aimed at preventing, delaying and even curing this terrible disease."

"People with Alzheimer's disease and their families are heroes, but even heroes need help. And they need all the help they can get!" Rep. Markey said, "As the Co-Chairs of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, we welcome this new Alzheimer's Study Group and thank the co-chairs for their work in addressing one of the most pressing health care issues of our time. We are pleased to be joined by partners from all backgrounds, all industries and all across the political spectrum who are serious about putting an end to this terrible disease."

"Exciting breakthroughs in the search for effective treatments and cures for Alzheimer's disease have been made in the years since we formed the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease. However, much work remains to be done to better treat those afflicted with Alzheimer's and assist their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Study Group is poised to play a pivotal role in helping tackle those challenges. The commitment and expertise this new study group brings to the table creates a tremendous opportunity to identify research and service gaps and help define a strategy to address the needs and concerns of Alzheimer's patients, caregivers and loved ones," said Representative Smith.

The Alzheimer's Study Group announced today will be a non-partisan, independent collection of health policy experts to evaluate the country's current efforts to combat the disease and to recommend strategies for addressing identified shortcomings.

"We are in an urgent situation and we need action now. Today is another bipartisan step forward in addressing this epidemic," said Senator Mikulski, Chairwoman of the HELP Committee's Retirement and Aging Subcommittee and lead sponsor of Alzheimer's Breakthrough and Family Assistance 2008 Legislation. "Alzheimer's disease is an all American disease that needs an all American effort."

"Alzheimer's disease affects a significant and growing number of older Americans," Senator Burr said. "This disease is an incredible burden on families, our health care system, and our economy. Recently, we have seen many exciting advances in Alzheimer's research, which demonstrate it may be possible to delay, halt, or reverse the progression of the disease. By forming this bipartisan task force, I hope we can identify practical approaches to reducing the burden of Alzheimer's disease."

"There are currently more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this number will increase to as many as 16 million if action isn't taken now," said Harry Johns, Alzheimer's Association President and CEO. "Alzheimer's disease requires the immediate and full attention of our nation's elected and non-elected leaders to avert an impending crisis and this bipartisan, independent Study Group will provide the necessary analysis and guidance to help shape future efforts in research, prevention and care."

Every day, Alzheimer's disease robs millions of Americans of the thoughts, memories, and dreams that define them as individuals. Countless children, spouses, loved ones and caretakers also suffer as they watch the disease unfold in a family member, friend, or patient. An estimated 5.1 million Americans now have Alzheimer's and it's estimated that up to 16 million older Americans will suffer from this devastating disease by the year 2050.

The Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease was created to focus national attention on Alzheimer's Disease and the health crisis it presents. The goals of the Task Force are to educate and focus attention on Alzheimer's disease; to encourage increased research funding for the discovery of treatments and a possible cure; and to foster open bipartisan discussion about public policy solutions to help meet the long term care needs of persons with the disease. The Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease currently includes 23 U.S. Senators and 171 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.