

CONTACT: Alzheimer's Association, 312.335.4078, [media@alz.org](mailto:media@alz.org);

## **Alzheimer's Association Applauds AARP's \$60 Million Investment in the Dementia Discovery Fund**

**CHICAGO, June 25, 2018** — In honor of their 60th Anniversary, AARP has announced a \$60 million investment in the Dementia Discovery Fund (DDF), a venture capital fund that focuses specifically on research into drug approaches. Joining AARP in this effort are co-investors United Healthcare Group and Quest Diagnostics. United Healthcare Group and Quest Diagnostics are contributing an additional \$15 million, \$10 million and \$5 million respectively, for a total capital investment of \$75 million.

The Alzheimer's Association welcomes and applauds AARP, United Healthcare Group and Quest Diagnostics in joining the fight against Alzheimer's with these valuable capital investments. The new investments by these partners will focus on adding to existing drug development. These are positive steps and play an important role in new drug development, especially after some larger pharmaceutical companies have reduced such plans.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's and being cared for by over 15 million family caregivers, as published in the Alzheimer's Association 2018 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report. It is an enormous issue and one of the top fears of AARP members due to the significant emotional, physical and financial burden. According to Facts and Figures, those who have dementia spend five times more annually on out-of-pocket health expenses than those who don't have Alzheimer's, and the disease accounts for direct American health care costs of \$277 billion in 2018, with projected growth to \$1.1 trillion in 2050.

With these personal and financial costs accelerating, discovery is critical. Formed in 2015, based on the work of the World Dementia Council, DDF is a venture capital fund that to date is focusing specifically on research into drug approaches with four focus areas (microglial biology and inflammation; mitochondrial dynamics; trafficking and membrane biology; and synaptic physiology).

Drug development requires years – sometimes decades – of preliminary groundwork to identify disease pathways and drug targets. Critical to any success in discovery is the infrastructure that funds drug development. This infrastructure includes research lead by universities, organizations like the Alzheimer's Association.

As the worldwide nonprofit leader in funding Alzheimer's research, the Alzheimer's Association plays a critical role in that infrastructure -- contributing approximately \$160 million to directly fund cutting-edge research in 21 countries around the world, all while relentlessly working with Congress to increase the nation's federal commitment to Alzheimer's disease research. Over the past three years, Alzheimer's Association advocacy efforts have secured increases of \$350 million, \$400 million and \$414 million with funding now stand at \$1.9 billion annually — important progress, but still more is needed.

The Alzheimer's Association will continue to invest in cutting-edge projects that advances science in marketplace gaps and across a broad spectrum of scientific pathways that hold the most potential to help people today and change the trajectory of this devastating disease. Our funding and convening, along with venture capital funds and traditional industry participants, are all crucial and complementary players in the process of achieving the treatments needed to change the future of dementia.

On behalf of the millions impacted by Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association extends our sincere welcome to AARP, United Healthcare and Quest Diagnostics in joining the fight against Alzheimer's and other dementias with these valuable capital investments. While we all work together to find an end to Alzheimer's and other dementias, the Alzheimer's Association will continue to provide important care and support to families through our local programs, our free 24/7 helpline and online tools. Launching in July will be a new online tool, Community Resource Finder, a co-branded initiative between the Alzheimer's Association and AARP, to provide our constituents and the public the ability to locate helpful dementia and aging-related information and support services.

### **Alzheimer's Association**

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. It is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research. The Association's mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Its vision is a world without Alzheimer's. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800-272-3900.

###