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New Alzheimer’s Association Report Shows Growing Cost and Impact of Alzheimer’s Disease on Families, California and the Nation
-Cost to Medi-Cal $3.5B in 2017; nationwide payments exceed a quarter trillion-
-35% of caregivers report declining health-

San Jose, CA, March 7, 2017– Medi-Cal costs attributable to caring for people with Alzheimer’s will reach $3.5B in 2017, according to findings from the 2017 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures report. The report was released today by the Alzheimer’s Association. In addition, for the first time, total payments for caring for people with Alzheimer’s in the United States exceeded a quarter trillion dollars ($259 billion).

The report also discusses the disease’s impact on caregivers, such as family members. The Facts and Figures report found that the strain of caregiving produces serious physical and mental health consequences. For instance, more than one out of three (35 percent) caregivers for people with Alzheimer’s or another dementia report that their health has gotten worse due to care responsibilities, compared to one out of five (19 percent) caregivers for older people without dementia. Also, depression and anxiety are more common among dementia caregivers than among people providing care for individuals with certain other conditions.

“The data is clear. Government costs are spiraling upward while families’ health and personal finances are deteriorating,” said Elizabeth Edgerly, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Alzheimer’s Association, Northern California and Northern Nevada.

“This disease must be a priority for our country. Finding a disease-altering treatment is key, and the federal government must continue its commitment to increase funding for Alzheimer’s research.”

The Alzheimer’s Association is also calling on Congress and the president to maintain the Medicaid long-term care safety net while expanding options and support for family-centered home and community-based care. Most people with Alzheimer’s will eventually need long-term care services or nursing home care, which are covered through Medi-Cal.

“As congress debates changes to the Affordable Care Act and entitlement reform, it is essential to preserve Medi-Cal coverage for people living with Alzheimer’s,” said Dr. Edgerly. “Families facing Alzheimer’s and related disorders need support now more than ever. The number of people with the disease is growing and the costs are rising.”
Soaring Cost, Prevalence and Mortality

The Facts and Figures report provides an in-depth look at the latest national statistics and information on Alzheimer’s prevalence, incidence, use and costs of care, caregiving and mortality.

Findings in the report show that despite support from Medicare, Medicaid and other sources of financial assistance, individuals with Alzheimer's or other dementias still incur high out-of-pocket costs. The average per-person out-of-pocket costs for seniors with Alzheimer's and other dementias are almost five times higher than average per-person payments for seniors without these conditions ($10,315 versus $2,232).

Although deaths from other major causes have decreased, new data from the report shows that deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased significantly. Between 2000 and 2014, nationwide deaths from heart disease decreased 14 percent, while deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased 89 percent. In California, deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased 186%.

Alzheimer’s By the Numbers: Additional Findings on Prevalence, Incidence and Mortality

- Of the estimated 5.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's dementia in 2017, 5.3 million people are age 65 and older, including 630,000 in California.
- Barring the development of medical breakthroughs, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer's dementia may nearly triple from 5.3 million to 13.8 million by 2050.
- Every 66 seconds, someone in the U.S. develops Alzheimer's dementia. By mid-century, someone in the U.S. will develop the disease every 33 seconds.
- Approximately 480,000 people—almost half a million—age 65 or older will develop Alzheimer's dementia in the U.S. in 2017.
- Two-thirds of Americans over age 65 with Alzheimer's dementia (3.3 million) are women.
- Alzheimer's is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. and the fifth-leading cause of death for those ages 65 and older. In California, 12,644 people died with Alzheimer's in 2014, the most recent figure available.
- Alzheimer's remains the only disease among the top 10 causes of death in America that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed.

Cost of Paid and Unpaid Care

- Total national cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias is estimated at $259 billion (excludes unpaid caregiving), of which $175 billion is the cost to Medicare and Medicaid alone.
- Total payments for health care, long-term care and hospice for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias are projected to increase to more than $1.1 trillion in 2050 (in 2017 dollars).
- In California, the report estimated total Medi-Cal costs for people with dementia age 65 and older at 3.5 billion dollars for 2017. In the next eight years, that figure is expected to increase 46.8%.
"Caring for someone with dementia is incredibly rewarding but it can also be uniquely challenging," said Dr. Edgerly. "It may require managing significant behavioral symptoms, and caregiving responsibilities can persist for years - or even decades.

“Until we collectively achieve a world without Alzheimer’s, the Alzheimer’s Association will continue to support local families through our free 24/7 Helpline, local support groups, educational programs, and other support services. We want families to know they are not alone."


About 2017 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures
The Alzheimer's Association 2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report is a comprehensive compilation of national statistics and information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The report conveys the impact of Alzheimer’s on individuals, families, government and the nation’s health care system. Since its 2007 inaugural release, the report has become the preeminent source covering the broad spectrum of Alzheimer’s issues. The Facts and Figures report is an official publication of the Alzheimer’s Association.

About the Alzheimer's Association
The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our 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. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. For more information, visit the Alzheimer’s Association at alz.org or call the 24/7 helpline at 800-272-3900.

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