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ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES “LGBT DEMENTIA CARE PROJECT” IN SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, September 20, 2016 – The Alzheimer’s Association, in partnership with Openhouse and Family Caregiver Alliance, today announced the launch of the “LGBT Dementia Care Project” in San Francisco. The project aims to increase access to dementia-capable care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) seniors and adults with disabilities. The work will be funded by a two-year, $400,000 grant from the San Francisco Department of Adult and Aging Services.

Forming a Dementia Care Network
A key element of the project is creation of an LGBT Dementia Care Network in San Francisco. Initial work includes training of 50 agencies and organizations in the city—hospitals, professional, and community-based organizations—on integrating dementia and LGBT cultural sensitivity into their programs. The 50 newly trained community partners will then be invited to form and become an active part of an LGBT Dementia Care Network in San Francisco.

“The specific needs of LGBT seniors with dementia cannot be an afterthought,” said Edie Yau, Director of Diversity and Inclusion for the Alzheimer’s Association of Northern California and Northern Nevada. “We hope that the Dementia Care Network that emerges from our efforts will serve as a model for the entire country.”

Connecting the Community to the Network
Once an LGBT Dementia Care Network is in place, phase two of the project involves disseminating information to LGBT seniors through senior centers, libraries, faith-based communities, hospitals, long term care providers, and other related agencies. Agencies in the LGBT Dementia Care Network will also be asked to conduct outreach to LGBT seniors and to keep clients engaged with the network’s services.

“Raising the cultural competency among dementia care service providers is an important first step,” said Marcy Adelman, PhD, Co-founder and Board Member at Openhouse. “Ultimately, connecting residents to the LGBT Dementia Care Network of services will be the key to
reducing isolation and enabling the LGBT community to more fully access dementia care and support.”

**LGBT access to caregiving resources is currently limited**

According to the Alzheimer’s Association 2016 Facts and Figures Report¹, 83% of caregiving help provided to U.S. adults comes from family members, friends, or other unpaid caregivers. LGBT seniors with dementia are statistically less likely to have family members available to act as caregivers, and may not have the resources to employ a paid caregiver. One study² of 616 older LGBT residents in San Francisco showed that

- Nearly 60% of the participants lived alone.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) were neither partnered nor married.
- Only 15% had children; 60% of whom indicate that their children are not available to help them if needed.
- 40% did not have the minimum income necessary to meet their basic needs.

**Bias as a barrier to services**

LGBT seniors may also be less likely to access available services if they feel those services are not LGBT friendly. The Aging and Health Report³ showed that among LGBT older adults, thirteen percent say they have been denied healthcare or received inferior care. More than 20% do not disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to their physician.

**Alzheimer’s disease the most common cause of dementia**

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia, and one of the nation’s largest public health crises. It is the sixth-leading cause of death in America and the only one among the top ten that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed. In 2016, Alzheimer’s and other dementias will cost the nation $236 billion.

In San Francisco an estimated 20,000 people over the age of 55 live with Alzheimer’s disease, and 60,000 people serve as unpaid caregivers.

**About the 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 or call 800.272.3900.

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