

[<Back](#)

 [Print](#)

alzheimer's  association

# Brain Matters

Mid-May E-Newsletter

May 20, 2010

in this issue

[Changing The Trajectory of Alzheimer's Disease](#)

[Treating Common Irregular Heartbeat Might Also Ward Off Alzheimer's](#)

[Drugstore Genetic Testing: Are We Ready?](#)

[Early Stage Programs: Alley Theatre on June 5](#)

[Bank of America Museums On Us Program](#)

[Houston: Dementia Cases Fill Missing-Person Log](#)

## • **Treating Common Irregular Heartbeat Might Also Ward Off Alzheimer's**

By treating the common [irregular heartbeat](#) known as atrial fibrillation in a certain way, doctors might also [help prevent Alzheimer's disease](#) and other forms of dementia, new research finds.



In atrial fibrillation, the upper chambers of the heart beat chaotically, causing blood to pool and increasing the potential of clots, stroke, heart failure and death.

Recent research has shown that atrial fibrillation more than doubles the risk of Alzheimer's, especially in relatively younger patients, noted Dr. John D. Day, lead author of two new studies and a cardiologist and electrophysiologist, or heart rhythm specialist, at the Heart Institute at Intermountain Medical Center in Salt Lake City.

[Click to learn more.](#)

## Changing The Trajectory of Alzheimer's Disease



A new report from the Alzheimer's Association,

## • **Drugstore Genetic Testing: Are We Ready?**



Word came in the news last week that Walgreens would begin selling genetic testing kits over the counter in their stores. You know -- stop by for a candy bar, pick up a kit to learn if you'll develop Alzheimer's

Disease. Or picking up your allergy medicine? Why not

["Changing the Trajectory of Alzheimer's Disease: A National Imperative"](#), shows that in the absence of disease-modifying treatments, the cumulative costs of care for people with Alzheimer's from 2010 to 2050 will exceed \$20 trillion, in today's dollars. The report, which examines the current trajectory of Alzheimer's, based on a model developed by the Lewin Group for the Alzheimer's Association, also shows that the number of Americans, age 65 and older who have this condition, will increase from the 5.1 million today to 13.5 million by mid-century.

Total costs of care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease by all payers will soar from \$172 billion in 2010 to more than \$1 trillion in 2050, with Medicare costs increasing more than 600 percent, from \$88 billion today to \$627 billion in 2050. During the same period, Medicaid costs will soar 400 percent, from \$34 billion to \$178 billion. One factor driving the exploding costs by 2050 is that nearly half (48%) of the projected 13.5

scrape the inside of your mouth to see if your saliva can predict your chances of developing Parkinson's Disease?

Within 24 hours the [FDA called a halt to Walgreens' plans to sell those kits](#). The FDA claimed the kits had not been approved for sale. That might have been the reason provided, but the media suggested that it was more about the potential problems that may come with lack of professional translation of the results that put the kibosh on the sale of the kits. That, and the fact that we Americans would flock to our doctors with requests for further (read: expensive!) testing.

• **Early Stage Programs: Alley Theatre on June 5**

The Chapter offers a number of [Early Stage programs](#), including a [Young Onset Group](#), and [Early Stage Peer group](#), and an art group called [Looking Together](#). In partnership with the Alley Theatre through their AlleyWays program, the Chapter offers theater experiences for our Early Stage families. Next month we have tickets for Boeing-Boeing at the Alley.

**Date:** Saturday, June 5th, matinee at 2:30pm.

**Tickets:** \$5 each - Call Kristen at 713-314- 1313 to purchase tickets.

**About the play**

[Boeing-Boeing](#), the high-flying, Tony award- winning comedy that had London and Broadway audiences airborne with laughter, is taking off on the Alley's Hubbard Stage. It's the story of Bernard, a successful American architect living in a posh Paris apartment as he deftly juggles three fiancées who are all flight attendants.

[For general ticket information, click here.](#)

• **Bank of America Museums On Us Program**



For those seeking low-cost activities in our area, you'll be pleased to learn of this Bank of America program. All that's needed to access the program is

million people with Alzheimer's will be in the severe stage of the disease - when more expensive, intensive, around-the-clock care is often necessary.

a Bank of America ATM, credit, or debit card. Armed with one of these cards, entry to participating museums is free for the first full weekend of every month.

Local participating museums include: the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Houston Zoo, the Childrens' Museum of Houston, and the San Jacinto Museum of History in La Porte.

### • Houston: Dementia Cases Fill Missing-Person Log

#### Quick Links...

- [Chapter Website](#)
- [Raise Your Voice for Alzheimer's](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Personalized Family Support](#)
- [Professional Conference on May 7, 2010](#)

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Dennis Shippey's crisis began when he failed to return to his Pasadena home after a winter's night walk with his dog. Hours passed, searches launched, but still the retired swimming coach - a victim of Alzheimer's disease - remained missing. Thirty-six hours elapsed before Shippey, dazed, dehydrated and delirious, was found in a field more than 40 miles away.



Such harrowing tales are all too familiar to Houston police Sgt. Stuart Harris, whose eight-investigator missing persons unit gets as many as three missing elderly calls daily. Most of the so-called "wanderers" are people suffering from Alzheimer's or other dementias - degenerative conditions that afflict as many as 340,000 Texans over age 65. [Read the entire Houston Chronicle story.](#)

