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Obama Administration Presents National Plan to Fight Alzheimer's Disease

HHS Secretary Sebelius outlines research funding, tools for health care providers, awareness campaign and new website

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today released an ambitious national plan to fight Alzheimer's disease. The plan was called for in the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA), which President Obama signed into law in January 2011. The National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease sets forth five goals, including the development of effective prevention and treatment approaches for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias by 2025.

In February 2012, the administration announced that it would take immediate action to implement parts of the plan, including making additional funding available in fiscal year 2012 to support research, provider education and public awareness. Today, the Secretary announced additional specific actions, including the funding of two major clinical trials, jumpstarted by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) infusion of additional FY 2012 funds directed at Alzheimer's disease; the development of new high-quality, up-to-date training and information for our nation's clinicians; and a new public education campaign and website to help families and caregivers find the services and support they need.

To help accelerate this urgent work, the President's proposed FY 2013 budget provides a \$100 million increase for efforts to combat Alzheimer's disease. These funds will support additional research (\$80 million), improve public awareness of the disease (\$4.2 million), support provider education programs (\$4.0 million), invest in caregiver support (\$10.5 million), and improve data collection (\$1.3 million).

"These actions are the cornerstones of an historic effort to fight Alzheimer's disease," Secretary Sebelius said. "This is a national plan—not a federal one, because reducing the burden of Alzheimer's will require the active engagement of both the public and private sectors."

The plan, presented today at the Alzheimer's Research Summit 2012: *Path to Treatment and Prevention*, was developed with input from experts in aging and Alzheimer's disease issues and calls for a comprehensive, collaborative approach across federal, state, private and non-profit organizations. More than 3,600 people or organizations submitted comments on the draft plan.

As many as 5.1 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease and that number is likely to double in the coming years. At the same time, millions of American families struggle with the physical, emotional and financial costs of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease.

The initiatives announced today include:

- Research -- The funding of new research projects by the NIH will focus on key areas in which emerging technologies and new approaches in clinical testing now allow for a more comprehensive assessment of the disease. This research holds considerable promise for developing new and targeted approaches to prevention and treatment. Specifically, two major clinical trials are being funded. One is a \$7.9 million effort to test an insulin nasal spray for treating Alzheimer's disease. A second study, toward which NIH is contributing \$16 million, is the first prevention trial in people at the highest risk for the disease.

- Tools for Clinicians -- The Health Resources and Services Administration has awarded \$2 million in funding through its geriatric education centers to provide high-quality training for doctors, nurses, and other health care providers on recognizing the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and how to manage the disease.
- Easier access to information to support caregivers -- HHS' new website, www.alzheimers.gov, offers resources and support to those facing Alzheimer's disease and their friends and family. The site is a gateway to reliable, comprehensive information from federal, state, and private organizations on a range of topics. Visitors to the site will find plain language information and tools to identify local resources that can help with the challenges of daily living, emotional needs, and financial issues related to dementia. Video interviews with real family caregivers explain why information is key to successful caregiving, in their own words.
- Awareness campaign -- The first new television advertisement encouraging caregivers to seek information at the new website was debuted. This media campaign will be launched this summer, reaching family members and patients in need of information on Alzheimer's disease.

Today's announcement demonstrates the Obama administration's continued commitment to taking action in the fight against Alzheimer's disease.

In 2013, the National Family Caregiver Support Program will continue to provide essential services to family caregivers, including those helping loved ones with Alzheimer's disease. This program will enable family caregivers to receive essential respite services, providing them a short break from caregiving duties, along with other essential services, such as counseling, education and support groups.

For more information on the national plan to address Alzheimer's disease, visit: www.alzheimers.gov.

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