

Public Policy Priorities – 2010 The Alzheimer's Association Iowa Chapter Network

More than 65,000 Iowa residents are living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. An additional 4,000 Iowans will be living with Alzheimer's by the end of 2010, bringing the total to 69,000.

Endangered Persons Advisory

Six out of ten people with Alzheimer's disease will wander during the course of the disease, sometimes frequently. Wandering behavior can be dangerous and even life threatening for a person with the disease. If not found within 24 hours, nearly 50% of those who wander are at risk of serious illness or death. Such behavior can panic caregivers and challenge law enforcement and other public safety personnel who are called upon to locate a wandering person.

Call to Action: The Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter Network asks policymakers to support initiatives that establish a framework for communication and missing person recovery between law enforcement, broadcasters, and the general public when a person with cognitive impairment wanders or becomes lost.

Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act

Due to the impact of dementia on a person's ability to make decisions and in the absence of other advanced directives, people with Alzheimer's disease may need the assistance of a guardian. Additionally, each state court system determines how guardianship issues are handled, and there are wide variations in jurisdiction issues across the country.

Call to Action: The Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter Network urges passage by the senate of HF 734, the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act, already passed by the Iowa House of Representatives. This legislation was created by the Uniform Law Commission and is endorsed by the American Bar Association and other associations of judges and attorneys.

Ensure Access to Medicaid Coverage for Dementia Care

Medicaid is the primary governmental source of long term care funding for individuals with dementia. About 40 percent of people receiving home and community based services and more than half of nursing home residents have dementia. The Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter Network believes it is critical to preserve the Medicaid safety net for long term care and to ensure that all programs meet the needs of those with dementia.

Call to Action: The Alzheimer's Association asks policymakers to oppose cuts to financial eligibility, tightening level of care criteria for long term care services, reducing services, or modifying existing waiver programs that assist persons with dementia.

Establish an Office on Alzheimer's Disease Within State Government

The Alzheimer's Disease Task Force was convened in 2007 to study the problem of Alzheimer's disease in Iowa. The Task Force made more than 20 recommendations for Iowa, including the establishment of an office on Alzheimer's disease within state government. The Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter Network supports this recommendation and believes the Governor's initiative to reorganize state government represents the ideal time to create this office.

Call to Action: Establish an office on Alzheimer's Disease within the Iowa Department of Public Health that will provide an integrated location to provide referral services, improve efficiency, coordinate efforts of multiple state agencies, and ensure collaboration of public and private organizations concerned about Alzheimer's disease.

Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

The Alzheimer's Association, Iowa Chapter Network supports the adoption of a legislatively mandated Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) program. POLST is a valuable tool for improving the quality of care for people at the end of life because it translates their wishes into an enforceable medical order. The Alzheimer's Association believes that individuals should be able to decide and articulate their preferences regarding end-of-life care and receive the treatment they want.

Call to Action: In 2008 the Iowa Legislature established the Iowa Physician Orders for Scope and Treatment pilot project in Linn County. The Alzheimer's Association asks policymakers to support the extension and broadening of the pilot (HF 2539, section 36) in Linn County, and to other areas of the state.

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Contact us toll-free for emotional support, local resources,
and information about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
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We're here to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Alzheimer's Association Mission Statement

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.

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