

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Hamzy to Sponsor Legislation to Support Alzheimer's Disease Patients, Caregivers



November is National Alzheimer's Disease Month

With the number of Alzheimer's Disease victims expected to increase significantly over the next few years, state Representative William A. Hamzy, R-78th District, said today he would introduce legislation during the 2007 legislative session to support Alzheimer's Disease sufferers, their families and those who care for people afflicted with the illness.

"Alzheimer's Disease is a growing epidemic in our state and across the country. Nursing home care is the most expensive service provided under Medicaid, and 50% of patients receiving nursing home care have Alzheimer's Disease. On the other hand, 75% of those diagnosed with the disease live at home where family members care for them. It is imperative that the state do more to help those suffering from the disease as well as those who care for them," Representative Hamzy said

"During the upcoming legislative session, which gets underway in January 2007, I plan to introduce legislation that would provide spouses and others who care for Alzheimer's patients at home a property tax reimbursement or an additional credit against their income tax liability or state assistance to reduce the costs of hiring home healthcare aides to help care for Alzheimer's victims." Representative Hamzy said.

"With new technology allowing us to detect Alzheimer's in its earlier stages we're redefining the face of the disease," said Bill Thies, vice president, medical and scientific affairs, the Alzheimer's Association. "Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging, nor is it a disease confined to the elderly. It is important to educate people as to the warning signs of the disease as well as fund continued research as an earlier diagnosis provides us a better understanding of the disease and allows us more time to treat it."

In 1983 President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation marking November as National Alzheimer's Disease Month, just 11 years before he was diagnosed with the disease. Upon diagnosis at age 83, President Reagan became a symbol for the nation of the nature of Alzheimer's disease. However, the face of Alzheimer's is changing.

There are currently 4.5 million Americans age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease. As baby boomers age, the number of Americans with the disease will continue to grow to as many as 16 million in 2050. Alzheimer's disease is considered to be 'early onset' if an individual is younger than 65 when symptoms first appear.

Early onset Alzheimer's can afflict people in their 30s, 40s and 50s. Newly analyzed data from the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS) indicates there may be half a million Americans under age 65 who have dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association, the world leader in Alzheimer research and support, is the first and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to finding prevention methods, treatment and an eventual cure for Alzheimer's. For more than 25 years, the donor-supported, not-for-profit Alzheimer's

Association has provided reliable information and care consultation; created supportive services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes. To learn more about Alzheimer's disease, contact the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org or (800) 272-3900.