

Latinos4gainstAlzheimer's

A Network of *Us*AgainstAlzheimer's

November 18, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
The Capitol, S-128
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
The Capitol, S-146A
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
The Capitol, H-305
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
1016 Longworth House Office Building
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

As Congress considers final FY16 appropriations legislation, **the LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's Coalition** requests your support for the \$350 million funding increase for NIH funded Alzheimer's disease research recommended in the Senate's FY 16 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS) appropriations bill. This funding increase is necessary to ease the hardship Alzheimer's places on millions of Latino families and to achieve our national goal of preventing and treating Alzheimer's by 2025.

The threat of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to our nation's health and finances are significant and well known. More than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease today, a population that is likely to triple by mid-century. Alzheimer's disease alone is estimated to cost our nation collectively more than \$225 billion annually, about 70 % of which is borne by Medicare and Medicaid. If the current trajectory remains unchanged, the total cost of this disease likely will exceed \$1 trillion annually by 2050. A study released in 2014 indicates that each year more than 500,000 million deaths are attributable to Alzheimer's disease, which would make it the nation's third leading cause of death. Despite this, Alzheimer's disease is the only leading cause of death that lacks any disease-modifying treatment or means of prevention. We know from experience that significant federal research investments in HIV, stroke and heart disease has saved lives and reduced overall health care costs. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, from 2000-2013, deaths attributed to HIV declined by 52%, stroke by 23% and heart disease by 14% while deaths attributed to Alzheimer's disease increased by 71%.

Alzheimer's is an underappreciated health disparity. In fact, Latinos are 1.5 times more at risk for Alzheimer's than non-Hispanic whites and Latinos present symptoms of the disease an average of seven years earlier than non-Hispanic whites. Conservative estimates project the number of Latinos with the disease will grow 600% to as many as 1.5 million by 2050. But these

numbers don't adequately capture the disease's impact on my family, the Latino community, or the nation.

Recognizing this challenge, Congress enacted the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) in late 2010, which resulted in the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. This plan established several goals, including Goal 1 of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025. While setting this goal was a significant step, it will be achieved only by committing the necessary public and private resources to accomplish that aim. To that end, we are united in our request that the FY 2016 L-HHS bill helps maximize the likelihood of achieving the 2025 goal. The recommendation of the Advisory Council established by NAPA, based on expert scientific advice, is that we commit, at a minimum, \$2 billion for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research supported by the NIH, approximately 1 % of the estimated costs of the disease to society.

We deeply appreciate the bicameral, bipartisan support in Congress for significantly increasing NIH Alzheimer's disease research funding. At \$350 million and \$300 million respectively, the Senate and House Appropriations Committees have proposed substantial funding increases for which we are tremendously grateful. While we recognize the many challenges Congress is facing in addressing multiple priorities in the final spending bill, we urge our Senators and Representatives take bold action by making the necessary investment in research to stop this disease before it is too late.

Please contact Jason Resendez, executive director of the LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's Coalition at jresendez@usagainstalzheimer.org or (202) 280-0884, with questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

The Hispanic Federation

The LatinosAgainstAlzheimer's Network

The Latino Alzheimer's & Memory Disorders Alliance (LAMDA)

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)

MANA – A National Latina Organization

The National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)

The National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)

National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA)