

Cost of Alzheimer's, dementia expected to soar by 2050

Written by Gothenburg Times
Friday, 13 July 2012 13:57 -

TAKE ACTION...GET INVOLVED

Area people can make the decision today to get involved in finding a cure. Take action by joining the 2012 Dawson County's Walk to End Alzheimer's, Wednesday, Aug. 8, from 8 to 7 p.m. at the Crossed Country Club. The walk is the nation's largest fundraiser for research of Alzheimer's and to support those afflicted with the disease and their families.

Participants can either walk or golf. The Crossed Country Club is donating the green fees for nine holes of golf and waiving the rental cost of golf carts and clubs.

A complimentary meal will be served at 5 p.m. If you are unable to attend the event and would like to make a donation you can go to the Dawson County Walk to End Alzheimer's website: <http://walktoendalzheimers.org/dawsoncounty> or mail a donation to: Linda Butterfield-Chaperson, 2012 Dawson County Walk to End Alzheimer's, 1711 Ave. J, Gothenburg, NE 68138. Make checks payable to Alzheimer's Association.

Every 68 seconds a person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's

According to the Alzheimer's Association's 2012 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, the cost to care for a person with dementia is on the rise.

"With aging baby boomers and the nation facing unprecedented economic challenges, it is more important than ever for America to deal with the Alzheimer's crisis," said Karen Noel, the executive director of the Alzheimer's Association's Great Plains Chapter. "The impact of Alzheimer's on Nebraska and Wyoming cannot be underestimated. With as many as 37,000 living with the disease now and an estimated 44,000 living with it by 2025, it is clear every effort must be made to address Alzheimer's disease today."

The new report reveals there are 15.2 million friends and family members providing care for individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias, including 77,632 caregivers in Nebraska and 26,920 in Wyoming. In 2011, these caregivers provided \$210 billion dollars' worth of unpaid care nationally, and \$1,101,451,591 in Nebraska and \$371,561,603 in Wyoming.

Caring for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the United States an estimated \$200 billion in 2012, including \$140 billion paid by Medicare and Medicaid.

Medicare payments for an older person with Alzheimer's or other dementias are nearly three times higher while Medicaid payments are 19 times higher than for seniors without Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Unless a concerted effort to change the trajectory of the disease is made today, costs for Alzheimer's and other dementias will soar from \$200 billion this year to as high as \$1.1 trillion dollars in 2050—just 38 years. This dramatic rise includes a 500% increase in combined

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Medicare and Medicaid spending and 400% increase in out-of-pocket spending for families.

Individuals who have Alzheimer's and other dementias are high consumers of hospital, nursing home and other health and long-term care services, which translate into high costs for Medicare, Medicaid and for millions of families.

While only 4% of the general population will be admitted to a nursing home by age 80, for people with Alzheimer's, 75% will be admitted to a nursing home by age 80, posing significant economic challenges to state Medicaid budgets.

As families struggle to survive in a challenging economic environment and states grapple with budget shortfalls, Alzheimer's disease threatens to overwhelm them both.

Unpaid caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias provided care valued at more than \$1 billion in each of 39 states.

Caregivers take on a tremendous financial, physical and emotional toll to help care for a loved one with Alzheimer's. Sixty-one percent of family caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias rated their emotional stress of caregiving as high or very high.

The physical and emotional impact on Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers is estimated to result in nearly \$9 billion in increased health care costs in the United States, including \$46,893,077 for caregivers right here in Nebraska and \$15,779,781 in Wyoming.

"Early detection, planning by those with the disease and families dealing with the disease is a crucial," Noel said. "Alzheimer's or another dementia take individuals through unfamiliar territory, and advance planning in the early stages of the individuals disease allow individuals to build their care team, make financial plans and prepare for future safety concerns, while they are still cognitively able to do so."

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The full text of the Alzheimer's Association's 2012 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures can be viewed at www.alz.org.