



**ALZHEIMER'S FOUNDATION OF AMERICA**

*Our mission is "to provide optimal care and services to individuals confronting dementia, and to their caregivers and families—through member organizations dedicated to improving quality of life."*

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chair, Senate HELP Committee  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee  
379A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 20, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley, Chairman Harkin, and Ranking Member Enzi,

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) and our more than 1,200 member organizations, I am pleased to write this letter of support for The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. We thank you for your leadership in working to find a comprehensive health reform solution for all Americans.

AFA believes that The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act includes several provisions that will be particularly helpful to individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and their family caregivers. We supported these provisions from the beginning of your effort and are grateful to see them included in the final bill:

- **Independence at Home Act demonstration:** According to CMS, 95 percent of Medicare beneficiaries with Alzheimer's disease have one or more other chronic conditions, such as coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Studies have shown that home-based coordinated care for this population, which this demonstration would provide, can reduce healthcare expenditures, improve quality of care and enhance health outcomes.
- **Inclusion of "detection of any cognitive impairment" in the new annual wellness exam for Medicare beneficiaries:** AFA believes this groundbreaking provision is a major step forward toward elevating the issue of memory problems as well as Alzheimer's disease and related dementias to the stature it deserves. Unlike cancer and heart disease, Medicare currently offers no benefit for early identification of memory problems or Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
- **Direct care training:** This provision provides much-needed funding over three years to establish new training opportunities for direct care workers that provide long-term care services and supports.
- **Geriatric workforce provisions:** These provisions authorize funding to geriatric education centers to support training in geriatrics, chronic care management, and long-term care for faculty in health professions

322 Eighth Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001  
(866) AFA-8484 • Fax: (646) 638-1546  
info@alzfdn.org • www.alzfdn.org

schools and family caregivers; develop curricula and best practices in geriatrics; expand the geriatric career awards to advanced practice nurses, clinical social workers, pharmacists, and psychologists; and establish traineeships for individuals who are preparing for advanced education nursing degrees in geriatric nursing.

- **The Nursing Home Transparency Act:** The no-cost nursing home transparency provisions will enhance American families' access to information about the quality of care in nearly 16,000 nursing homes that receive \$75 billion a year in Medicare and Medicaid funds, and they will improve the government's ability to ensure quality care and a better-trained staff in those facilities.
- **Background checks in long-term care facilities for employees with direct-patient access:** Families will also have greater assurance that their loved ones receiving long-term care are safe if the people who provide care have passed a background check for previous criminal activity and abuse.
- **The Elder Justice Act:** The Elder Justice Act provisions will strengthen the network of agencies that investigate abuse and neglect in facilities and in the community, including improving the training of long-term care ombudsmen and state health inspectors, requiring reporting of neglect and abuse, and ensuring that residents are protected when nursing homes close.
- **The CLASS Act:** The CLASS Act provisions would create a disability insurance program financed through voluntary payroll deductions for adults who become unable to perform at least two activities of daily living, and provide a much-needed benefit to help obtain services and supports, while providing disabled individuals more choices and opportunities to live and participate in their communities.

AFA also supports increased funding to State Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and appreciates the "Sense of the Senate regarding long-term care," which AFA will encourage you to address in the coming year.

In addition, we ask that the Senate consider including the loan repayment provisions contained in the Boxer/Collins bill, Caring for an Aging America Act (S. 750) as an amendment to the health reform bill. These programs will improve the quality of life of older adults by improving the care that they receive.

**Provisions on Loan Forgiveness: from S. 750, Caring for an Aging America Act (Boxer/Collins)**

- Geriatric and Gerontology Loan Repayment Program – provides loan repayment for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, pharmacists, psychologists and social workers trained in geriatrics or gerontology. (Sec. 2)
- Expansion of Nurse Education Loan Repayment - provides loan repayment for nurses who complete specialty training in geriatrics or gerontology. (Sec. 3)

AFA is the face of care for individuals and their families who are affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We are proud to support the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and we look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Sue Peschin, AFA vice president of public policy, at (202) 466-0590.

Sincerely,



Eric J. Hall  
President and Chief Executive Officer