

Remarks to the Aging & Older Adult Services Committee  
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Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bob Le Roy. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer's Association, Greater Pennsylvania Chapter, and like my colleagues on the panel, I'm very grateful for your interest in our cause and the opportunity to speak with you this morning.

The Greater Pennsylvania Chapter serves 59 counties—covering approximately 40,000 square miles—in Pennsylvania from regional offices in Erie, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Wilkes-Barre. The Chapter currently has a paid staff of 23, a chapter-wide Board of Directors with 23 members, and 4 Regional Advisory Councils with a total of 46 members. We have over 4,400 registered volunteer advocates—several of whom are seated behind us this morning—committed to informing and engaging legislators in Pennsylvania at all levels regarding all aspects of the disease and the needs and interests of those we serve.

Our primary focus is to bring help and hope to the more than 200,000 individuals and families in our service area struggling with the economic and emotional burdens of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Our Chapter offers many of the programs and services that Wendy described, including:

- ✓ Toll-free 24/7/365 Helpline (800-272-3900)
- ✓ Medic Alert + Safe Return

- ✓ 173 support groups for those with the disease and their caregivers
- ✓ Care consultation for individuals and families
- ✓ Continuing fee-for-service education and training for professional caregivers
- ✓ Chapter newsletter, with a current mailing list of 18,000

We also offer:

Two Younger Onset Support Groups designed specifically to provide regular opportunities for those diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementias under age 65 and their caregivers to share information, experiences, tears, hope, and humor.

The Family Caregiver Series is a four-part series that covers such topics as the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia, communication techniques, behavior management, the stages of Alzheimer's, care-giving strategies, community resources, and the latest medical and research information.

The Foundations of Dementia Care is a comprehensive dementia care training program designed to improve the quality of life for residents with dementia in long-term care settings. This nationwide training for direct-care workers and supervisors is part of the Alzheimer's Association's "Campaign for Quality Residential Care". The program offers classroom and online trainings, both based on care practices described in the Association's Dementia Care Practice Recommendations. There are several modules available for training: "Learning to Lead", "About Dementia" (which covers dementia basics, communication and behaviors), "Enhancing Mealtime", "Reducing Pain", "Making Connections", "Understanding Wandering", "Reducing Risks of Falls", "Promoting Restraint-Free Care", and "End of Life".

Looking forward...in January, 2010:

We will bring the "Memories in the Making" program to our chapter and introduce this wonderful way for people with dementia to communicate through

art. Other chapters' experience with this program suggests that its value lies in the creative process of making the art and expressing feelings and emotions trapped inside the dementia patient. The ensuing sense of accomplishment brings renewed joy and self-respect to the patient.

Working with Dr. David Gill, we will introduce a model for collaboration between the Alzheimer's Association and the Penn State Hershey Memory and Cognitive Disorders Clinic. In order for patients and caregivers to "bridge the gap" between the advice the Clinic gives to contact the Alzheimer's Association and actually contacting us to access our resources and support, we will provide staff and/or trained volunteers at the Clinic during regularly-scheduled office hours one afternoon each month.

Our budget for the current fiscal year is approximately \$1.9 million, which reflects growth of just over 9% from the prior year. We are very grateful to our donors and partners for investing in our growth in these challenging economic times—but it's not nearly enough to match the projected growth in the number of Pennsylvanians who do and will need our help.

Like our colleagues at the Delaware Valley Chapter, we receive only \$100,000 in funding from the Commonwealth, virtually all of our services are free to those we serve, and over 75% of our funds are raised from individuals through general donations, memorials, workplace giving, planned and deferred gifts, and special events.

Nearly 50% of our revenue comes from our Memory Walks. We hold 18 Walks across our service area from mid-September until mid-October, and this year—inspired by the energy and effort of over 500 volunteers—we welcomed more than 7,000 walkers and exceeded our overall fundraising goal. We also benefit from special events unique to each regional office, such as the Women's Hat Lunch in Erie, the Sarsfield Golf Classic in Hershey, the Carabella Fashion Show in Oakmont, the Fabulous Pirates' Casino Night in Pittsburgh, and the Spring Art Gala & Auction in Wilkes-Barre.

What we are describing to you today are our best efforts and continuing commitment to confront an epidemic that will overwhelm our health care system, no matter what form it may take given the scope of proposed legislation and the tone of the national conversation. Your influence, support, and actions are critical to our ability to help those we serve find the resources and the will to cope.

As you have seen and heard, I'm in very good company. Thank you very much.