



## Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to an End (CHANGE) Act

In 2023, it is estimated that 6.7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, a number that is estimated to rise to nearly 13.8 million by 2060. About 1 in 9 people age 65 and older have Alzheimer's. It is estimated that Alzheimer's and related dementia will cost our nation \$345 billion in 2023, not including the value of unpaid caregiving. By 2050, it is estimated that these direct costs will increase to nearly \$1 trillion.

More than 11 million Americans provide unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's or other dementia and provided nearly \$340 billion in unpaid care to people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia in 2022. Alzheimer's exacts an emotional and physical toll on caregivers, resulting in higher incidence of heart disease, cancer, depression, and other health consequences.

These numbers begin to tell the story of why – medically, economically and socially - Alzheimer's is the biggest healthcare crisis currently facing America and why we cannot wait to take action. Now, as new treatments are approved and glimpses at what could be on the horizon for those living with the disease emerge, ensuring screening and diagnosis is taking place is more essential than ever.

*The Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to an End (CHANGE) Act* would achieve this by better utilize the existing Welcome to Medicare initial exam and Medicare annual wellness visits to screen, detect, and diagnose Alzheimer's and related dementias in their earliest stages. An early documented diagnosis communicated to the patient and caregiver enables early access to care planning services and available medical and non-medical treatments and optimizes patients' ability to build a care team, participate in support services, and enroll in clinical trials. It also would allow this devastating disease to be caught in its earliest stages, and ensure appropriate access to treatment.

### **SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY:**

#### **Section 1. Short Title.**

Sets out the bill's short title the "Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to an End (CHANGE) Act of 2021".

#### **Section 2. Findings.**

Findings on Alzheimer's disease and its impact.

#### **Section 3. Cognitive impairment detection benefit in the Medicare annual wellness visit and initial preventive physical examination.**

Requires testing for cognitive impairment or progression of cognitive impairment in both the Welcome to Medicare initial exam and the Medicare annual wellness visits. Should cognitive impairment or progression of cognitive impairment be detected, patients are to be referred for additional Alzheimer's disease and dementia diagnostic services; to specialists trained in the diagnosis or treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; to community-based support services; and to appropriate clinical trials.