



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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**IMPACT OF NURSING SHORTAGE CRISIS ON  
ESCALATING ALZHEIMER POPULATION**  
*Alzheimer's Association Statement*

**Washington, D.C., February 23, 2009** – In just two short years, the first wave of baby boomers will begin to turn age 65 – the age of greatest risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. There are an estimated 5.2 million Americans living with this fatal, degenerative disease that today has no cure. With an aging baby boomer population, as many as 16 million people may have the disease by 2050. As the prevalence of Alzheimer's increases, so does the need for qualified nurses. We applaud the creation of the Champion Nursing Coalition, a broad spectrum of stakeholders who have come together to shed light on the grave threat the nursing shortage poses to the nation and the health care system.

Nurses serve as the bedrock of support for Alzheimer families throughout all stages of the disease. The need for more qualified nurses that can also meet the unique challenges of people living with dementia will become increasingly important with an aging society more at risk for cognitive impairment. Addressing the diminishing nursing workforce is absolutely essential to addressing the needs of this escalating Alzheimer population.

Approximately 70 percent of nursing home residents have some degree of cognitive impairment and 27 percent of older adults living in the community with severe disabilities are cognitively impaired. There is a consistent need for qualified, trained nurses to coordinate their care today – which will grow exponentially in the near future.

By 2010, there will be nearly a half million new cases of Alzheimer's develop each year and nurses will continue to play a crucial role in the lives of Alzheimer families. The Alzheimer's Association, the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research, looks forward to working with the partners in the Champion Nursing Coalition to spotlight the vital role nurses play in providing quality health care and enhancing care coordination. The Alzheimer's Association urges lawmakers to enhance the recruitment, education and training of nursing professionals to meet future demands.

**The Alzheimer's Association**

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

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