



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

The Alzheimer's Association of the Great Plains Chapter and the Midlands Chapter, a voluntary health organizations, are working throughout Nebraska to improve care for those living with the disease, and to find a cure for future generations. We can't do it alone. We call upon members of the Nebraska Legislative Assembly to join us in supporting:

## Nebraska Alzheimer's Disease State Plan

### **Problem**

- Over 45,000 Nebraskans are estimated to have Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Incidence of the disease is expected to **triple** by the middle of this Century.
- Approximately 60% of long-term care facility residents are cognitively impaired and require specialized care.
- Nebraska has no state plan to deal with the epidemic's devastating effects on our state's systems of health care, long-term care, community supports, or public safety.

### **Solution**

Direct the Nebraska Health and Human Services System's Unit on Aging to implement a task force to develop an Alzheimer's disease plan by January 2008. Mandate that the task force create a document defining the issues and forging solutions in the following areas: disease statistics, research efforts, diagnosis and treatment, financing long-term care, home and community based services, residential services, education and training, and public safety.

## Required Dementia Care Training

### **Problem**

- Over 45,000 Nebraskans are estimated to have Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Nearly 1 in 25 Nebraskans are expected to have the disease by 2025.
- Nearly 60% of all nursing home residents have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. This is in the total resident population; an estimated 10% actually reside in secure Special Care Units within the nursing homes.
- At this time, it is also estimated that 60% of Assisted Living residents have Alzheimer's disease or other dementing illnesses; typically in the early to mid-stages of the disease but they do exhibit characteristics of dementia that require increased attention by facility staff.

### ***Solution***

The current training language in Nebraska is only applicable to staff in Special Care Units which represent only 10% of the entire Alzheimer's population being served by nursing homes and assisted living facilities. In light of the fact that such a large percentage of both nursing homes and assisted living facilities are caring for persons with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders, we should expect/accept no lower training standard than that of Special Care Unit staff.

- Prior to resident interaction, at least 8 hours of dementia training for all nurses, certified nursing aides (CNAs) and direct care staff with 8 hours of continuing education (the 8 and 8 rule)
- Prior to resident interaction, at least 4 hours for all other staff (including administrators) with 2 hours of annual continuing education.
- A monitoring mechanism is needed to ensure compliance; such as CNA registry.
- Portability of completed training among sectors
- A formal certification of training program by a lead state agency (HHS Regulation and Licensure) for licensing.

## Required Training for Nebraska Law Enforcement Officials

### ***Problem***

Law enforcement and other public safety officials, such as emergency medical technicians or paramedics, firefighters and 911 dispatchers are often involved in contending with persons with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders, who wander or exhibit other characteristics, such as agitation and combativeness, caused by their dementing illness. Law enforcement personnel may not have the ability to identify persons with Alzheimer's disease. Nevertheless, a person, who has wandered away from home may encounter law enforcement personnel in a number of common circumstances, including: auto accidents, erratic driving, domestic violence calls, indecent exposure and shoplifting.

### ***Solution***

It is imperative to the safety of persons with Alzheimer's disease, their caregiving families and the general Nebraska citizenry that we educate public safety personnel about responding to persons with Alzheimer's disease.

- Provide dementia training and education on the Alzheimer's Association's national Safe Return identification system and database which has had a 99.7% effectiveness rate from its inception in 1997 through 2003.
- Mandate training at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Center for State Patrol officers and other law

enforcement officers on Alzheimer's disease and related disorders; training can be offered by the Alzheimer's Association of the Great Plains and Midlands Chapters.

- A study of the development of an alert system that applies to adults with developmental disabilities, dementia or other cognitive impairments based on the 2006 Georgia statute that created "Mattie's Call". The Alzheimer's Association can provide both the dementia training and assist in the provision of information related to effective state alert systems.