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Alzheimer’s Movement – Catalyzed by Alzheimer’s Mississippi and UsAgainstAlzheimer’s – Strengthens Amidst Growing Urgency to Develop an Alzheimer’s Cure

Jackson, MS – A multigenerational movement to defeat Alzheimer’s disease, buoyed by the partnership of Alzheimer’s Mississippi, UsAgainstAlzheimer’s and a host of other national, state and local Alzheimer’s-serving organizations, was catalyzed during this fall’s National Alzheimer’s Summit in Washington, DC, proving to be a decisive moment in a fight against a disease that is the nation’s third-leading cause of death.

As the United States readies for a new Administration and Congress, the movement is poised to strengthen and further effect change by advancing increases in research funding, advocating for a new high-speed clinical trial system, mobilizing American families, promoting research into effective care and support programs, and increasing engagement of the physician community.

“The movement embodies the urgency and passion felt by tens of millions of families touched by this disease,” said UsAgainstAlzheimer’s Co-Founder and Chairman George Vradenburg. “This is a not a top-down movement, with a single leader. We are demanding the commitment of global, national and local community organizations, working collaboratively to achieve the cure to this disease. This is a cancer-sized problem requiring a cancer-sized response. We are proud to be a part of this unified movement made up of so many individuals and organizations.”

Eleven state and local organizations throughout the United States, serving metropolitan areas of approximately 53,000,000 people – embodying 17 percent of the U.S. population – were instrumental in galvanizing momentum for the Summit and providing a strong, unified voice for this multifaceted and dynamic movement.

“The time has come for constructive and meaningful collaboration to ensure quality care for families coping with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia,” said Patty Dunn, Alzheimer’s Mississippi CEO. “We are building stronger community partnerships with health organizations to provide additional programs and working in concert with state agencies to elevate the voice of Mississippi families affected by Alzheimer’s disease.”

Leading up to the national Alzheimer’s Summit, Alzheimer’s Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Health presented data from the Cognitive Module from the 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) at the Mississippi Alzheimer’s Conference convened by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Division of Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementia. Over 12% of Mississippians age 45 and over reported confusion or memory loss and 62% indicated that memory problems interfered with
daily activities. This data tells us that over 143,000 Mississippians may develop significant memory problems, a fact that policy makers should not ignore.

Adding volume to the many voices of the movement are prominent organizations in several major coalitions, including the patient-powered industry coalition Global CEO Initiative on Alzheimer’s, the clinical-trial reform initiative called Global Alzheimer’s Platform Foundation and the 95-member Alzheimer’s-serving coalition, Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer’s Disease (LEAD), led by Ian Kramer, Executive Director at LEAD.

In total, attending the Summit were more than 425 leaders, spanning 135 different organizations across various sectors. The three-day event (see video) included the “Diversifying the Race for a Cure and Care: the 2016 Alzheimer’s and Dementia Disparities Convening,” which formulated the first-ever community driven action plan to increase awareness, understanding and action on Alzheimer’s disease among communities of color.

In addition, the Annual Out of the Shadows Dinner featured a live presentation from First Lady Laura Bush, as well as remarks from all living First Ladies, an acknowledgment of how the movement to defeat Alzheimer’s extends beyond party lines.

On the final day of the Summit, advocates representing nearly half of U.S. states visited more than 120 House and Senate offices, advocating for the needs of people with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. Patty Dunn, Alzheimer’s Mississippi CEO and TJ Harvey, Director of Public Policy, Advocacy and Communications, met with Congressman Gregg Harper, Senator Thad Cochran, and Senator Roger Wicker.

Mississippi’s Congressional delegation have supported Alzheimer’s research funding to the National Institutes of Health and have co-sponsored several pieces of legislation to ensure proper diagnosis and support for caregivers. Senator Roger Wicker continues to be an advocate of the Alzheimer’s Movement and a voice in the senate for Alzheimer’s. He sponsored the EUREKA Act, S. 2067, which over the past 14 months built a strong bipartisan coalition of 62 co-sponsors. We are pleased that the language of the bill has now been included in the House-Senate 21st Century Cures Act.

During National Alzheimer’s Awareness Month in November and beyond, the reach of this movement will continue to build across the country, with more organizations and among a greater number of influencers. Led by Alzheimer’s Mississippi, UsAgainstAlzheimer’s, its partners and passionate individuals, the movement’s mission to push for more funding, drive medical solutions and decrease disparities in communities of color will become even more apparent.

There are 52,000 Mississippians living with Alzheimer’s disease who are being provided informal care by over 206,000 family caregivers. Earlier this month Governor Phil Bryant signed a proclamation distinguishing November as Alzheimer’s Awareness Month and Family Caregiver Month. The document also recognized the work of Alzheimer’s Mississippi to provide programs and services for families, increasing awareness about Alzheimer’s disease, and advocating on behalf of caregivers and those with a dementia diagnosis.
Join the movement and the fight against Alzheimer’s at www.alzms.org/advocacy.

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**About Alzheimer’s Mississippi:**
Providing supportive services and advocating for research funding to improve treatment and find a cure. Alzheimer’s Mississippi provides programs and services, free of charge, to Mississippi citizens with Alzheimer’s and related disorders, their families, caregivers, and the community. Alzheimer’s Mississippi was organized in 1990 and became an independent Mississippi based nonprofit in March 2016 to ensure 100 percent of funds raised stay in Mississippi. For more information, call 601-987-0020, or visit alzms.org.

**About UsAgainstAlzheimer’s (UsA2):**
An innovative non-profit organization demanding – and delivering – a solution to Alzheimer’s. Driven by the suffering of millions of families, UsAgainstAlzheimer’s presses for greater urgency from government, industry and the scientific community in the quest for an Alzheimer’s cure – accomplishing this through effective leadership, collaborative advocacy, and strategic investments.

Founded in 2010, UsAgainstAlzheimer’s has worked across sectors to: (1) secure the national goal of preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer’s by 2025 and help secure nearly $500 million in additional public funding for Alzheimer’s research over the past few years; (2) drive global efforts that resulted in the leaders of the world’s most powerful nations, the G7 group, to embrace a similar 2025 goal and to call for greater levels of research investment and collaboration; and (3) forge industry commitments to improve efficiencies for an expedited drug discovery and approval process.