

alzheimer's association

Mid-South Chapter, West Tennessee Office

Alzheimer's Association Mission and Objectives

The Alzheimer's Association was first formed by a compassionate, concerned group of healthcare professionals, family caregivers, and community leaders. Realizing the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease, their goal was to serve those with Alzheimer's, support their dedicated caregivers, and educate the community. The Alzheimer's Association West Tennessee office is based in Memphis and serves 23 counties in West Tennessee, Northern Mississippi and Eastern Arkansas and is a part of the Mid South Chapter. Other offices of the Mid South Chapter serve the Highland Rim, Middle Tennessee, and North Alabama. The Mid South Chapter is affiliated with the Chicago based national Alzheimer's Association.

Mission Statement: The Alzheimer's Association, Mid-South Chapter, is a nonprofit organization that

- Promotes and provides quality education and training for the community and professionals;
- Delivers accurate information and referrals to the community;
- Provides family and patient support for patients, families, and caregivers;
- Advocates for public policy and legislation that will improve supportive services for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers;
- Encourages and supports research into the prevention, cause, improved diagnosis, therapy, and cure of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

The Alzheimer's Association's goals and objectives include the following:

- 1) Individuals and families have the education they need about the disease and are linked to community resources and healthcare providers that meet their needs.
- 2) Caregivers receive emotional, physical, and mental support required to continue their caregiving responsibilities.
- 3) Professionals (healthcare, clergy, etc.) are educated about Alzheimer's and related illnesses, the diagnosing process, caregiver issues, and community resources.
- 4) The community is educated about Alzheimer's disease, other dementia-related illnesses, the effects on the person with the disease, the effects on the family, and the indirect effects on businesses and the community.
- 5) Legislation at the local, state, and federal level is impacted as a result of advocacy efforts from the Alzheimer's Association.

Long-Term Goals of the Alzheimer's Association

Alzheimer's disease is a demographic time bomb. Since 1975, the number of Americans afflicted has risen from 500,000 to nearly 5 million and by 2050 the number will reach 14 million. The aging of the population, particularly baby boomers, and the advances in medicine that lead to longer life spans are resulting in more and more people succumbing to the devastation of Alzheimer's disease.

The exponential growth of the number of people with Alzheimer's nationwide will also be reflected in the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in West Tennessee. Over 30,000 West Tennesseans with Alzheimer's disease today will exceed 45,000 by the end of this decade. The impact on West Tennessee is even greater when one understands that for each person with the disease, two other family members' lives are impacted because they care for a loved one with the disease.

Description of Population Served

Alzheimer's disease primarily affects people over 65. One in ten over the age of 65 will have Alzheimer's, 1 in 5 over age 75, and 1 of 2 over age 85. On average the person with the disease will live eight years, but may live as long as twenty. Seventy-five percent are cared for in their home by family members with most of their care paid for out of their own pockets. Alzheimer's knows no boundaries. It affects both genders, all races, and all socio-economic levels. The most common risk factor is advancing age.

In addition to the person with the disease, family caregivers are also impacted significantly. The typical caregiver is an employed 55-year-old adult daughter with a family of her own. As she begins her role as caregiver, she is unaware of the toll it will take on

her physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Studies show that caregivers of people with Alzheimer's are at increased risk for worsening health, depression, anxiety, and isolation. Research also shows that caregivers have higher absenteeism from work and lower productivity. Many caregivers find themselves sacrificing work time, job promotions, and other opportunities for professional advancement due to the demands of their caregiving duties. In many cases, caregivers are faced with leaving their jobs or changing jobs to care for their loved one.

Programs and Services:

The Alzheimer's Association offers a variety of services designed to aid persons with Alzheimer's disease, their caregivers, and the professionals who provide services to them. These services include:

- **Information and Referral**
Our toll free Helpline provides emotional support and information about Alzheimer's disease, resources available from the chapter, and links to community assistance such as physicians, care providers, and financial and legal planning referrals. The West Tennessee Office receives an average of 150 calls per month on the Helpline.
- **Care Consultation, face-to-face and by telephone**
We provide supportive counseling to those diagnosed with Alzheimer's and their families upon request.
- **Support Groups**
We develop and maintain support groups throughout West Tennessee. There are currently 44 support groups in the area. These groups provide support to an average of 100 caregivers per month.
- **The Safe Return Program**
The Safe Return Program is a program of the National Alzheimer's Association. When a person is registered in the Program, s/he is entered into a national database to aid in recovering that person in the event that s/he wanders away. 60% of persons with Alzheimer's will wander and 46% will die from dehydration and exposure if not found within 48 hours.
- **Educational Programs**
The West Tennessee Regional Office provides educational programs to professionals, caregivers, civic organizations, church groups, and others interested in learning about Alzheimer's. The Office also provides information to groups at health fairs, educational presentations at support group meetings, and training to professional caregivers. The Office formed the Alzheimer's Training Consortium with local service providers to strengthen this training program.
- **Public Policy**
The West Tennessee Office is an active participant in the Tennessee Coalition of Alzheimer's Association s, a public policy committee dedicated to advocate for legislation that will improve services to those with Alzheimer's.

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