

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address November 2, 2012

Alzheimer's Awareness

Hello. This is your congressman, Michael Burgess. The most valuable asset of every living person is their mind: their cognitive thinking, their memory, their coordination. Unfortunately, a slow and progressive disease robs more than five million Americans of their ability to utilize their minds. It starts out just a little, then more, and then all.

The cause of Alzheimer's disease is unknown. Its onset and progression are often misinterpreted as simple signs of an aging mind, but a failure to remember simple short-term events turns into forgetting names, words, and even the ability to control one's body. The idea of anyone losing their faculties, powerless against the effect of a terrible disease that literally robs memory is difficult to contemplate.

In addition to the effects of Alzheimer's disease on the patients themselves, the costs that come to families are also debilitating. It's been reported that 1 in 7 of those diagnosed with Alzheimer's lives alone, and almost half do not have an identifiable caregiver.

Extensive research is underway to improve our understanding of Alzheimer's disease. Here is some positive news. There are over one hundred clinical trials going on across the country testing ways to cure, slow down, and reverse the effects of Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, for about every 3 dollars in Medicare and Medicaid that's spent on Alzheimer's care, only one penny is invested by the National Institutes of Health in finding a treatment and a cure.

Funding however is not the only obstacle. Government agencies must work collaboratively to implement a plan that ensures progress is made. In 2010, the National Alzheimer's Project Act was passed with bipartisan support. This historic project created the first coordinated Alzheimer's plan and brought together government entities to develop key initiatives that focus on treating and preventing Alzheimer's. The plan was only the first step. Now, with commitment and coordination, we can move on to the goal to make progress in finally overcoming this disease.

I've introduced the Making Investments Now for Dementia Act, also known as the MIND Act. This legislation would allow citizens to invest in bonds whose revenue is applied directly to Alzheimer's research. The legislation is a concerted effort to improve funding for an issue that is just as important as any other social issue we face today. I've worked with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and other experts, and will continue to advocate on behalf of the victims, the patients directly, or indirectly, of this tragic, progressive disease.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. For more information about this issue and other issues before the United States Congress, please visit my website at burgess.house.gov. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.