



March 29, 2012

Dear Members of the NAPA Community Advisory Committee:

Thank you for your efforts to develop a national plan to address the growing crisis of Alzheimer's Disease. In 2009 the San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services published a Strategic Plan for Excellence in Dementia Care which we are in the process of implementing. Our work has been informed by experts in this field, including the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Northern Nevada. As we work to implement our plan we know that a National Plan has the potential to enhance and possibly even advance our efforts locally.

One very clear theme that permeated every workgroup in the process of developing our Strategy for Excellence in Dementia Care was the need for education and training. Not only were family caregivers desperate for education, information and training, but also, first responders, public transportation workers, airport staff, health professionals including physicians and disability agencies, wanted to be better informed and able to refer persons with Dementia and their Care partners to appropriate resources early in the disease process. We currently have a project funded through the Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program that supports the goal of education and training as defined in our Strategic Plan. This project, a partnership between our Department, the Alzheimer's Association, University of California at San Francisco and Kaiser Permanente of San Francisco is testing ways to reduce hospitalizations by providing Caregiver support and education on best practices in Alzheimer's and dementia care to individuals who are part of Kaiser Permanente.

In reviewing the National Plan I do not see any reference to the ADSSP. This concerns me as I believe that ADSSP is the only federally funded program that uniquely targets dementia patients and their families with support and educational services which are as yet not considered "evidenced based practices" but are based on sound assumptions about care

San Francisco is a very diverse city, and yet in our program we are able to target only English speaking Caregivers and persons with Dementia because we do not have enough funding to broaden our study at this time. However, our expectation is that this information gained will give us information that would help fund the part of the plan devoted to populations disproportionately affected by Alzheimer's disease and populations facing care challenges, such as those from racial and ethnic minorities. This program supports and educates people with the disease and care partners, which is a significant concern addressed in the plan.

We are concerned that the ADSSP funding may be eliminated. I urge you to use the NAPA planning process to assure that funding for programs that are still small and in development but have the opportunity to teach us much about establishing best practices and continues to help develop services for under-served, at-risk populations. This is the ONLY federal program supporting this work for patients with Alzheimer's Disease Care partners and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the National Alzheimer's Project Act. It is a wonderful undertaking and we are privileged to be part of the process.

Sincerely,

E. Anne Hinton
Executive Director