

February 6, 2012

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING – NAPA@ hhs.gov



Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
c/o HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Room 424E, Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Comments for Draft Framework of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

Merck & Company, Inc. appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Framework of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. Merck is an innovative, global health care leader that is committed to preserving and improving human life. We continue to focus our research on conditions that affect millions of people around the world.

We welcome government's leadership in developing a National Plan to help focus public and private resources on common goals and strategy. The Framework provides the right priorities, balance, and general focus for the effort.

Alzheimer's research and drug development stands on the threshold of a major advance in treatment, with the potential for significant disease modification in the near future. It is a critical time when greater collaboration and resources can have a substantial impact. We look forward to working with HHS to develop a clear pathway in the National Plan for achieving a therapeutic breakthrough in Alzheimer's Disease. This type of breakthrough will not only improve the lives of patients, but will also help ease the cost pressures currently being experienced by government health care programs.

A real advance in therapy will require regulatory alignment with emerging science, including prompt government action to establish biomarkers, provide guidance on clinical trial design, and review and approve new drug applications. We look forward to working with the Secretary to ensure a favorable environment that facilitates efficient clinical trials and expeditious review of new treatments.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Framework of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. McMahon', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert A. McMahon
Leader US Federal Policy & Government Relations