

Dr Ronald Peterson and Members of the NAPA Advisory Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Framework for the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. The Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's Disease 2020 (PMA 2020) collaboration congratulates NAPA on this first important step in the development of a national plan to overcome Alzheimer's disease. The Draft Framework presents a comprehensive set of strategies to address this devastating disease that places an enormous emotional and financial burden on individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their families and also on the health and community care systems committed to supporting them. These strategies will spur research needed to cure the disease, early detection to permit individuals and families to delay premature decline and engage in planning that can have a tremendous impact on quality of life and provide the support needed for informal caregivers to maintain their own health while providing care.

As NAPA moves forward in the development of the plan, we recommend that it look to the accomplishments of the Alzheimer's Disease Support Services Program (ADSSP) for inspiration and guidance. The ADSSP program is funded by the Federal Government and administered by the U.S. Administration on Aging. Nationally ADSSP has provided grants to states to build dementia capacity within public and private agencies, building a core of expertise that has led to the development of services and systems that have changed the way in which community and health care services identify and support people with dementia and their families. Over the last twelve years, Minnesota has gratefully used this resource to embed dementia capability within county long term care assessment systems, to engage with local clinics and hospitals to identify people with dementia early and connect them to education and support services and to translate evidence based interventions into practice such as the New York University Caregiver Intervention that has been demonstrated to delay nursing home placement by up to 18 months compared to the control group.

We encourage you to build on this strong base by calling for restored funding for ADSSP which was reduced by 65% for 2012. It makes no sense to so severely reduce a program that embodies so many of the objectives of NAPA and the Council at least until a better program that can more effectively achieve these objectives is ready to go. We encourage you to call for an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and lessons learned from ADSSP to inform the design of a new program that builds upon its achievements. And then call for adequate federal funding to meet the new program objectives. NAPA provides an incredible opportunity to take the best of what we've learned and grow it into community and health care systems that provide the support and education needed anywhere people with dementia and their informal caregivers reside while it is also working towards the cure we all hope for.

PMA 2020 is a voluntary, state-wide collaboration of medical, academic, community, government, business and nonprofit stakeholders across Minnesota seeking to implement needed system change, using the Minnesota legislatively mandated Alzheimer's Disease Working Group recommendations as a springboard for action.

Robert Karrick, Chair

Prepare Minnesota for Alzheimer's 2020