



spotlight on health

Survey: Accelerated Treatment Needed For Alzheimer's Disease

(NAPSA)—As the first baby boomers turn 60 this year, they are beginning to confront the consequences of growing older. A new survey shows the majority of boomers are anxious about how Alzheimer's disease (AD) will affect their health and quality of life. At the same time, many boomers said they are frustrated with the government's and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) efforts to address the looming AD crises.

"These survey findings underscore the fact that when baby boomers are asked to address the potential of Alzheimer's in their future, they are clearly not ready emotionally, psychologically or financially," said Daniel Perry, executive director of the Alliance for Aging Research and chair of the ACT-AD Coalition, which commissioned the survey.

About Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease, which is universally fatal, affects 4.5 million Americans and causes millions more to leave the workforce to care for loved ones who eventually need around-the-clock attention. As the disease progresses, people suffer severe cognitive deterioration, confusion, disorientation, personality and behavior change and eventually death. Estimates suggest that by 2010, Alzheimer's disease will affect one in 10 people over age 65, or 5.6 million Americans—and the cost of care will increase 75 percent to about \$160 billion annually in Medicare costs alone.

ACT-AD

Accelerate Cure/Treatments for Alzheimer's Disease



Almost 90 percent of survey participants think Alzheimer's drugs deserve the same priority status as drugs that treat other serious diseases.

The ACT-AD (Accelerate Cure/Treatments for Alzheimer's Disease) Coalition is launching a campaign to call attention to the urgency of the Alzheimer's disease crisis and, at the same time, the lack of a well-defined approach in the U.S. for swift delivery and access to promising transformational therapies that could halt or reverse the disease.

"Alzheimer's is a cruel disease that has been on the back burner of science for 100 years but no one is immune to it and the toll will be staggering unless baby boomers wake up to the threat and do something about it," said Meryl Comer, Emmy Award-winning television journalist and full-time caregiver for her husband, who was diagnosed with AD at age 58. "When the onset of the disease is early for a loved one, it is like being a witness to your own future, and I am terrified for us all."

Key Survey Findings

- Boomers said they place top priority on new drugs that could change the course of Alzheimer's disease, feel that the FDA should give priority review to these drugs, expect the right to decide

whether to use them and are willing to accept a degree of risk with promising drugs.

- Ninety to 95 percent of respondents said that they would either be unprepared or would find life "not worth living" if they were forced to face limitations common to AD by the time they were 70.

- Eighty percent of respondents said that their current savings would not be sufficient to cover the cost of care if they were diagnosed and 81 percent said the same thing about their families' savings. Eighty-three percent said they are worried that the health care system is underprepared for the coming Alzheimer's crisis.

- Only 8 percent of respondents feel that current AD treatments are adequate. Eighty percent are willing to take experimental treatments that have the potential for stopping the disease and preserving their quality of life, even if significant health risk were involved. Ninety percent of respondents felt that drugs that have the potential to preserve quality of life for AD patients should be given the same priority review and fast-track status that the FDA gives to drugs for other life-threatening diseases.

- When provided with an overview of the FDA's current review policy for Alzheimer's drugs, 84 percent said they feel that more should be done and over 75 percent feel that Alzheimer's should be made a top priority.

For more information, visit www.act-ad.org.