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**THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE DEMENTIA RESEARCH FUNDING TO MARK WORLD ALZHEMER’S DAY 2018**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) has today, World Alzheimer’s Day 2018, called on the Government to increase dementia research funding following the release of a crucial World Alzheimer’s Report 2018 ‘The state of the art of dementia research: New frontiers’ which looks at breakthroughs and barriers into dementia research on a worldwide scale.

This report, which has been released by Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) today, asks where we are now, why have there been no major breakthroughs in 20 years and what are the barriers to finding solutions. It looks at exciting new work in the field, the new frontiers of dementia research and it underlines our vital call for increased dementia research funding.

Dementia is one of the most significant global health and social crises in the 21st century, yet too often diagnosis is made late. There is also no cure for dementia; it’s the seventh leading cause of death worldwide. Without significant investments into dementia research, we will be unable to venture into new frontiers. The report finds that not enough people are getting into research on dementia, and that needs to change.

In Ireland 55,000 people have dementia but many more do not have a diagnosis. For the average person going to their local doctor, the diagnosis process is not likely to be straightforward, or quick. Improved diagnosis means more awareness and more awareness means less stigma. Less stigma means that there is more hope.

The ASI is currently leading on dementia research prioritisation and is providing a platform for stakeholders to identify and define dementia research priorities. The ASI is seeking funding to address research gaps and priorities, and address the lack of a secure pathway for researchers due to the funding shortage in this area.

The ASI recently hosted a Dementia Research Forum, along with the Dementia Neurological Network of Ireland (DNNI), which brought together stakeholders engaged in dementia research. The Forum included a research prioritisation exercise that sought to identify and define dementia research priorities. Stakeholders identified the challenge of supporting and retaining early career researchers.

This Forum also recognised the acute challenge of funding dementia research, and explored possibilities for research funding into the future.

The Health Research Board (HRB) and the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) presented views about how dementia research should be funded going forward. ASI is committed to progressing this research prioritisation process in order to develop agreement on research needs and prioritisation.

It is estimated that there are 55,000 people with dementia in Ireland and for every one person with dementia three others are directly affected and the number of people with dementia is expected to more than double over the next 20 years to 113,000 in 2036.

There are approximately 4,000 new cases of dementia annually in Ireland.

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO, Pat McLoughlin said:**

**“This World Alzheimer’s Report 2018 makes for very interesting reading.** We are fully supportive of this report and the wider Every 3 Seconds campaign which is being backed by all the major international dementia organisations to highlights the fact that dementia is the global health and social challenge of our time.

“In Ireland there are an estimated 55,000 people with dementia and, on a worldwide scale, there are more than 50 million people currently living with dementia and this figure is predicted to increase by 10 million in 2018. These are startling figures and Governments across the world must take this issue more seriously.

“As we mark World Alzheimer’s Day, we are calling on the Government to dramatically increase awareness, detection and diagnosis of dementia by meeting targets of the World Health Organization (WHO) global plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025which aims to improve the lives of people with dementia, their families and the people who care for them, while decreasing the impact of dementia on communities and countries.

**“We hope that the release of the World Alzheimer’s Report will increase awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia and spark a debate which will lead to more governments and businesses dedicating funds and focus to help people with dementia and their families live better lives.”**

**Further Information:**

For all media enquiries, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 0860441214.

**Notes to the Editor:**

**● World Alzheimer’s Month 2018**

World Alzheimer’s Day (21st September) was launched in 1994 to mark the 10th anniversary of Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) and has grown significantly since then. World Alzheimer’s Day 2017 was observed in over 80 countries and World Alzheimer’s Month continues to attract the support of Alzheimer and dementia associations around the world.

The theme for this year’s World Alzheimer’s Month campaign is Every 3 seconds. Alzheimer Disease International (IDA) is encouraging people all around the world to understand the importance of recognising dementia as a disease and challenging the stigma that surrounds the condition. By focusing on this statistic, they are emphasising the huge global impact of dementia worldwide.

World Alzheimer’s Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about a health issue that will affect more and more people as the years pass, while encouraging crucial efforts to support those already affected by the disease around the world.

The number of people living with dementia around the world is expected to almost double every 20 years, reaching 152 million by 2050. The global cost of dementia is over $US one trillion in 2018, exceeding the market value the world’s largest companies including Apple and Microsoft.

Two out of every three people globally believe there is little or no understanding of dementia in their countries. The impact of World Alzheimer's Month is growing, but the stigmatisation and misinformation that surrounds dementia remains a global problem that requires global action.

**● The Alzheimer Society of Ireland**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the national leader in advocating for and providing dementia-specific supports and services and each year the organisation provides more than one million hours of community-based dementia-specific care throughout Ireland. A national non-profit organisation, the ASI is person centred, rights-based and grassroots led with the voice of the person with dementia and their carer at its core. The ASI also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline offering information and support to anyone affected by dementia at 1800 341 341 and provides a number of others supports and services to people with dementia and their carers across Ireland including 51 Day Care Centres and one Respite Care Centre. The ASI also provides Home Care, Family Carer Training, Dementia Advisers, Alzheimer Cafes and Social Clubs.

**● Dementia: Understand Together campaign**

Dementia: Understand Together is a public support, awareness and information campaign led by the HSE, working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Genio, that aims to inspire people from all sections of society to stand together with the 500,000 Irish people whose families have been affected by dementia. For more information on dementia, and the services and supports available, Freephone 1800 341 341 or visit [www.understandtogether.ie](http://www.understandtogether.ie)

**About dementia:**

• The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double over the next 20 years, from 55,000 today to 113,000 in 2036.

• Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.

• Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.

• The majority of people with dementia (63%) live at home in the community. Over 180,000 people in Ireland are currently or have been carers for a family member or partner with dementia with many more providing support and care in other ways.

• Each year over 4,000 people develop dementia. That’s at least 11 people every day and anyone can get dementia - even people in their 30s/40s/50s.

• 1 in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland is under 65.

• The overall cost of dementia care in Ireland is just over €1.69 billion per annum; 48% of this is attributable to family care; 43% is accounted for by residential care; formal health and social care services contribute only 9% to the total cost

• Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland