

# STATE OF ALASKA



## *Executive Proclamation by Governor Bill Walker*

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is a progressive, degenerative and incurable fatal illness of the brain that affects a person's ability to remember, exercise judgment, think and perform everyday activities; and

WHEREAS, the projected number of Alaskans age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease will grow from 7,100 in 2017 to 11,000 in 2025. These projections do not include the number of persons with related dementias or those younger than 65 with Alzheimer's; and

WHEREAS, advanced age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, and Alaska's older adult population continues to grow at a faster rate than any other state. Age alone does not cause the disease; however, research points to other risk factors including cardiovascular disease, family history, prolonged depression, traumatic brain injury, uncontrolled diabetes, hearing loss, Down's syndrome, social isolation, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans live with Alzheimer's disease on average six to eight years after they receive a diagnosis. The lengthy period of illness with steadily increasing care needs renders Alzheimer's disease a difficult and expensive disease to manage, as it requires greater utilization of inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing facility stays, and home care visits in comparison to persons without dementia; and

WHEREAS, the informal costs of caregiving for people living with dementia are borne by family and friends as unpaid caregivers. In 2016, approximately 33,000 Alaskans provided an estimated 38 million hours of unpaid care with a total value of \$480 million; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans should be aware of this public health concern, its symptoms, the importance of early detection, and the existence of resources and services that offer assistance, such as the Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, adult day programs, family caregiver support programs, and other service providers.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Walker, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim November 2017 as:

### *Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month*

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to become educated about this disease, to personally engage in healthy behaviors to promote brain health, to support those with the disease and their loved ones who care for them, and to remember those who have been lost to Alzheimer's disease.

Dated: October 31, 2017



A blue ink signature of Bill Walker, written in a cursive style.

*Bill Walker, Governor  
who has also authorized the  
seal of the State of Alaska to  
be affixed to this proclamation.*