

TESTIMONY ON THE ALZHEIMER'S RESPITE PROGRAM

(FTR)

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Alzheimer's disease is the only one of the top 10 causes of death that has no cure or treatment. The number of people living with the disease could triple by 2050, if no cure is discovered. In the United States, 7 out of 10 people worry about developing memory loss or developing some form of dementia or having a loved one that will develop it.

My mother makes the above statistics a living reality for our family -- NOW! My mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a little over two years ago. Alzheimer's is a cruel and progressive disease. She and my father live in their home in Syracuse, NY. My father can take care of her, for now since she can feed herself, dress and bathe, and do some light household chores—far less than she used to do. My mother is a safety hazard in the kitchen especially with a gas stove. My parents, are 86 years old and will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary this coming September. For now, my father is her primary caregiver.

When my father can no longer care for her, I worry- since I live 5 hours away from my parents. I am one of the growing "sandwiched" generations. It will be very soon that our family will be facing how to provide breaks, respite care, for my father as the demands of caring for our mother increase. The Alzheimer's respite program will be an integral part of that process for supports and services so that my mother can continue to stay at home instead of transitioning to more expensive nursing home care. This disease will continue to ravage families as they work to care for their family members affected by this disease. Respite care for families affected by this disease has allowed those burdened with caring for a loved-one to find relief and allow family caregivers to maintain their own jobs.

There is a saying that in the near future there will be two types of people in the United States— those who have Alzheimer's, and those who will be directly affected by the people who have Alzheimer's in caring for a loved-one.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide this testimony.