

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 13, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Ave SW, Room 120F
Washington, DC 205 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

As Co-Chairs of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, we are writing to urge you to attend the upcoming World Health Organization (WHO) First Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia, scheduled to be convened March 16-17 in Geneva, Switzerland. Given the growing global recognition of the enormous human and economic threats posed by Alzheimer's disease and U.S. commitments to address this disease, your participation in this meeting will help demonstrate the leadership of the United States on this important issue.

Nearly three years ago the United States developed our National Plan to Address Alzheimer's disease in response to the National Alzheimer's Project Act. The plan established its primary goal as preventing and effectively treating Alzheimer's disease by 2025. The United States became the first nation to embrace a bold and time-bound goal for stopping Alzheimer's disease. In late 2013, the leaders of the G7 (now G8) nations embraced a similar goal of combating Alzheimer's by 2025, along with a commitment to increase funding for Alzheimer's disease research.

There have been a number of international meetings convened to discuss global commitment on the issue of dementia. Unfortunately, to date, despite the United States legacy of leadership on Alzheimer's and dementia, our leaders have been absent from these high-level events, including the December 2013 G8 Global Action Against Dementia, convened by British Prime Minister David Cameron in London and the G7 legacy events that occurred throughout 2014.

United States leadership has been instrumental in spurring much of the global activity and attention to this terrible disease. We cannot afford to take a backseat during global discussions, particularly given the enormous impact Alzheimer's disease will have on our nation's health and financial well-being if the current trajectory of this disease remains. The WHO's First Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia is an important component in the emerging global initiative to prevent or effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025. This will be the first time the WHO convenes an international dementia summit at the ministerial level, and it is inviting health ministers from more than 60 nations. Your participation will send an important message that the United States will continue to lead and drive the growing global battle against Alzheimer's disease. We urge you to strongly consider representing our nation at this WHO Conference.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator