

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 3, 2015

Contact: Jamie Hagan – 858.229.2690

Rachel Laing – 619.929.7946

**SAN DIEGO ALZHEIMER'S ORGANIZATION CHOOSES TO REMAIN
LOCAL, INDEPENDENT***The former Alzheimer's Association San Diego Chapter
will return to its roots*

The board of the San Diego chapter of the Alzheimer's Association announced today that it has decided to separate from the National Alzheimer's Association. A new, locally-operated organization has been formed in order to best serve those affected by Alzheimer's and dementia in San Diego. The new entity, Alzheimer's San Diego, will take over the programs and partnerships under local direction, as the chapter has done for more than three decades.

The decision to disaffiliate from the National Alzheimer's Association was necessitated when the national Alzheimer's Association voted to consolidate all of its independent affiliates into a single nonprofit entity controlled from its Chicago headquarters. Chapters did not have a meaningful say in the decision; in fact, half of the 54 independent chapters expressed their desire to remain independent affiliates — a preference that went unheeded by the national board.

The restructuring would have severely jeopardized the San Diego chapter's ability to provide the quality and level of service the community has relied on for more than 35 years. The local governing board and all local decision making would have been turned over to individuals thousands of miles away in Chicago.

"Every year, we provide services to tens of thousands of San Diegans with the disease and those who are caring for them," said Alzheimer's San Diego President and CEO Mary Ball. "There will be no disruption of service. We will remain the premiere organization in San Diego focused on care and support and advancing critical local research for a cure."

Among the notable recent achievements of the local organization are:

- **The Alzheimer's Project:** Championed by County Supervisor Dianne Jacob, the project convenes a wide-ranging group of clinicians, researchers, caregivers, law-enforcement officials and Alzheimer's San Diego. The initiative includes upgrades to the County Sheriff's Take Me Home Registry, expansion of Alert San Diego to help quickly find those who wander from their homes and development of a comprehensive set of guidelines for physicians for diagnosing and treating Alzheimer's.

- **Volunteer Respite Companion Program:** This first-of-its kind, local program gives family caregivers what they need most: a break.
- **Collaboration4Cure:** An unprecedented local initiative led by Alzheimer's San Diego, the City and County of San Diego, Darlene Shiley and San Diego's premier research institutes to advance local drug discovery for a cure. In October, the initiative announced the eight world-class researchers in San Diego who were selected to pursue promising drug discovery projects in San Diego.
- **Major increase in San Diegans served:** In 2015, the local organization served nearly 30,000 San Diegans through its free programs and services — a 40 percent increase over 2014.
- **Awarded \$1 million Federal Grant:** The grant will be used to expand services and support for San Diego residents who are living with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers, as well as to adults with Down syndrome, who have a 50 percent chance of developing Alzheimer's disease before age 50.
- **Co-awarded \$2.5 million Federal Collaborative Grant:** The \$2.5 million co-awarded grant is recognition of the impressive teamwork in San Diego to address the epidemic of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. This grant will be carried out in partnership with SDSU, UCSD, the county of San Diego, Glenner Memory Care Centers, San Diego County Medical Society Foundation, and Southern Caregiver Resource Centers.

The services Alzheimer's San Diego provides will gain importance as the disease afflicts more and more families. Alzheimer's is the third-leading cause of death in San Diego, and the number of Americans suffering from the disease and related dementias is expected to triple over the next decade as Baby Boomers age.

Operating as an independent entity will create a myriad of new economic and fundraising opportunities for the San Diego organization. Alzheimer's San Diego will be able to keep 100% of every dollar raised to support free local programs and local research for a cure (under the national Alzheimer's Association's current shared fundraising system, 40% of every unrestricted dollar raised in San Diego went to the national association's headquarters in Chicago). Alzheimer's San Diego will have the freedom to create new and innovative programs and services that meet the needs of San Diego.

"Leading this organization as we collaborate with San Diego's community, medical research and government leaders to fight this disease is a gratifying and important challenge," said Ball. "I'm honored to have the confidence of this board and look forward to accomplishing great things on behalf of the San Diego community we serve."

###