

The San Diego Union-Tribune

More turmoil in fight against Alzheimer's disease

By The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board | 5 p.m. Oct. 21, 2015

On the heels of a huge battle between two university titans over Alzheimer's research funding, now the national Alzheimer's Association, its San Diego chapter and 56 other local chapters around the country are in major conflict over the national organization's plan to consolidate all the local groups into a single charity.

The board of the national Alzheimer's Association voted last weekend to move ahead with the consolidation plan. It would mean that directors of the now-independent local chapters would be relegated to advisory status, all donations collected locally would have to be sent to the Chicago-based headquarters, certain services would be run through Chicago and local staff also would report to Chicago.

Mary Ball, president and chief executive of the San Diego/Imperial chapter, said in an email to supporters this week that the chapter already sends 40 percent of its donations to the national headquarters and that the consolidation could reduce or eliminate some local programs and services. She also said the local chapter is considering breaking off its affiliation with the national association.

This editorial board is not in position to assess what's best for Alzheimer's patients, families and research nationwide. But it's hard to imagine that decision-making in Chicago could serve these constituencies in San Diego as well as the local governing structure already does