

MetLife Foundation

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U.S. Adults Fear Alzheimer's More Than Heart Disease, Diabetes or Stroke, But Few Prepare

MetLife Foundation Survey reveals little planning for Alzheimer's among its key findings

New York City, New York, May 11, 2006 – U.S. adults fear getting Alzheimer's disease more than heart disease, stroke or diabetes. However, nearly nine out of 10 have taken no steps to prepare for an illness that attacks nearly 50 percent of those who live past age 85.

These are two key findings from a report, "MetLife Foundation Alzheimer's Survey: What America Thinks," conducted by Harris Interactive for MetLife Foundation. The survey also found that more than a third of U.S. adults have a family member or friend who has Alzheimer's, and three out of five are concerned that they may someday have to provide for or care for someone with the mind-robbing disease.

Other major findings in the MetLife Foundation survey are that almost three-quarters of Americans say they know very little or nothing about Alzheimer's, although 93 percent are at least aware of the disease. Eight out of 10 think it is important to plan ahead for the possibility of getting Alzheimer's – but 83 percent have taken no steps to prepare for the possibility of Alzheimer's. For example, more than half (58 percent) report that they have not designated anyone to take care of their affairs if they were to get Alzheimer's disease.

"Our survey clearly shows that although adults fear Alzheimer's and the devastating effects it has on individuals, families and communities, few have done anything to prepare for a disease that destroys a person's memory, personality and ability to function independently," said Sibyl Jacobson, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "The greatest risk factor in Alzheimer's is age, and, as Americans live longer, the threat of Alzheimer's will continue to increase."

MetLife Foundation has been a leading advocate for Alzheimer's disease research for the past 20 years and presents annual awards in support of leading-edge research on Alzheimer's disease. The Foundation's historical role in supporting Alzheimer's research and its emphasis on issues related to aging, prompted the Foundation to commission a survey of the public on Alzheimer's. The survey explores the public's knowledge, fears and plans for the possibility of developing Alzheimer's.

The "MetLife Foundation Alzheimer's Survey: What America Thinks" was conducted by Harris Interactive® for MetLife Foundation. The survey was conducted by telephone within the United

States between January 19 and 22, 2006 among 1,008 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Currently, 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's, a number that is expected to nearly quadruple to 16 million by 2050, according to the Alzheimer's Association. One in 10 people over 65 have the disease; the rate is closer to 50 percent for those over 85. The Alzheimer's Association and the National Institute on Aging estimate the cost of current care exceeds \$100 billion annually.

With the aging of America's population these numbers are sure to become even more dramatic in the future, making it imperative that individuals and institutions plan for the future. The growing number of older people, many with Alzheimer's will have an impact on every part of society.

There are a number of resources for more info on Alzheimer's and care giving issues. They include:

www.alz.org – Alzheimer's Association

www.alzfdn.org – Alzheimer's Foundation of America

www.caregiving.org – National Alliance for Caregiving

www.nfcacares.org – National Family Caregivers Association

www.pbs.org/theforgetting – The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer's

The full report on the survey can be found at www.metlife.org

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. MetLife and MetLife Foundation have invested more than \$15 million for Alzheimer's research and public information programs, including \$10 million through the Awards for Medical Research program. MetLife Foundation also sponsored the Emmy-award winning PBS documentary, The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer's. Working with the Alzheimer's Association, the Foundation has supported caregiving videos, resources for the Hispanic community and the Safe Return identification program, which addresses the problem of senior wandering. The Foundation has expanded its focus on aging issues, including helping people remain physically and mentally fit and remaining engaged in the community. It also supports programs addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities and volunteer opportunities. Grants support health, education, and civic and cultural programs. More information about MetLife Foundation is available at www.metlife.org.

About Harris Interactive

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