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For Immediate Release
Press Release

May 12, 2011

African American Caregiving and Wellness Forum on Healthy Aging Focuses on Caregiver Challenges

Alzheimer's is one of the highest causes of deaths in the U.S. And by 2030, the number of African Americans with the disease is expected to double, according to a new report.

"The scary part about what's happening with Alzheimer's is it's increasing and more people are getting it as 'Baby Boomers' age, said Leslie Walker, who was the sole caregiver for her mother who later died from the disease. "In the African American community, we're twice as likely to get the disease as Caucasians."

On Friday, May 20, family caregivers, health professionals and community members will attend the Alzheimer's Association's 10th annual African American Caregiver Forum West Oakland Senior Center. Learn about brain health, managing difficult behaviors as a caregiver, and more.

Over 80 percent of all care given in the home is by unpaid family members and there are nearly 15 million unpaid caregivers of people with Alzheimer's or dementia, according to the Alzheimer's Association's *2010 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*. The report shows African Americans are disproportionately affected by this growing public health threat.

Event, taking place from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. is a collaboration between the Alzheimer's Association, in partnership the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center, West Oakland Senior Center and Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson

"Without the proper resources and support services, planning and caring for elder family members and loved ones is a tremendous challenge," said Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson. "Besides the great information this event provides, the Alameda County Area Agency on Agency is also a great resource for Alameda County residents."

Risk factors for Alzheimer's include heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, all conditions that are prevalent in the African American community. Research and new drug treatments have led to a decline in deaths from cancer, heart disease and stroke

Although it is difficult planning and caring for older loved ones with Alzheimer's, getting information can both minimize the disease's impact and help empower caregivers.

"We need to learn more about how to cope with Alzheimer's in the family and how to get family members evaluated early," said Walker. "The sooner that you can detect it, the more you can do to help that person live a better life and cope with the disease."

To read the full report and get information about the upcoming forum, visit www.alz.org/norcal.
<http://edconference.kintera.org> or call: (650) 962-8111.

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