

# Celebrities Help Put A New Face On Alzheimer's

(NAPSA)—There are currently more than five million Americans who suffer from Alzheimer's disease. A recent survey found many Americans don't realize that Alzheimer's is fatal and many people don't understand the health care implications on our nation. In response, the Alzheimer's Association is launching a first-of-its-kind initiative—the *Champions* Consumer Education Campaign—to correct misperceptions and motivate Americans to champion the cause.

Many will sport purple T-shirts with the words "Voice," "Move," and "Open" in an effort to raise awareness of the cause and funds for Alzheimer's care and research. The T-shirts are worn by celebrities including David Hyde Pierce, Ricki Lake, Lea Thompson, Peter Gallagher, Victor Garber, Kate Burton, Tracie Thoms and Dick Van Dyke as part of the Alzheimer's Association's new *Champions* campaign.

The national initiative challenges more than five million Americans— one for every person currently living with the disease—to learn about Alzheimer's and join the fight against this devastating disease.

"If Alzheimer's ever was cause for public concern, it's now," said David Hyde Pierce, who leads the Association's campaign for change. "Our aging population compels the need for effective disease-modifying drugs. We simply can't afford this disease, physically, emotionally or financially."

## Hope on the Horizon

There are new treatments on



**Victor Garber lends a voice as part of a national program that encourages Americans to speak up for increased Alzheimer's research funding.**

the horizon—currently nine drugs are in Phase III clinical trials, several of which show great promise at slowing or stopping the progression of the disease. This, combined with new diagnostic tools, has the potential to change the landscape significantly.

## Making A Difference

To get involved with the initiative, Americans can purchase a campaign T-shirt, advocate for more research funding, register for a local Memory Walk or make a donation online by visiting [www.actionalz.org](http://www.actionalz.org). They can also view photos of celebrities wearing the purple T-shirts on the site. Additionally, campaign events will be held throughout the country.

## The Truth About Alzheimer's

A new poll shows that while

nearly half of Americans know someone with Alzheimer's, 94 percent say they don't know much about the disease.

"It's this lack of understanding that has fueled complacency," actress Kate Burton said. "Shows like 'Grey's Anatomy' and the character I played—Ellis Grey—have slowly awakened our senses to what individuals with the disease and families of those afflicted by this disease have to endure. The reality is, Alzheimer's can strike as young as age 30 and it's a slow, debilitating, fatal disease. This new campaign will hopefully open people's eyes to the reality of this horrible disease."

## A Growing Issue

As the millions of baby boomers turned 60 last year, Alzheimer's prevalence is expected to skyrocket. By mid-century, the number of people with Alzheimer's is expected to grow to as many as 16 million—more people than the current populations of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston combined. At a projected cost of \$400 billion by the year 2030, Alzheimer's has the capacity to bankrupt Medicare.

"The fact is, someone suffering from Alzheimer's disease will lose the ability to form thoughts, remember simple words and ultimately communicate," Pierce said. "People with Alzheimer's need us to be their voice and open minds to the realities of this disease."

## Learning More

For more information, visit [www.actionalz.org](http://www.actionalz.org) or contact an area Alzheimer's Association chapter.