



**ATTN: NEWS EDITOR  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOVEMBER 1, 2016**

**NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE  
AWARENESS MONTH**

TYLER – Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's disease. Currently the sixth leading cause of death in Texas, it is estimated there are more than 3,500 people in Smith County living with dementia, and those numbers are expected to increase 40% within the next decade. During National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month this November, the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County is bringing attention to the community impact of this devastating disease.

“The prevalence of Alzheimer's disease will continue to increase as our population ages,” said Stephanie Taylor, executive director at the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County. “This affects all of us as our workplaces, churches, community organizations, schools, and public services support the more than 30% of seniors who will be diagnosed with dementia in their lifetime, as well as their caregivers. The Alliance is here to ensure we can all be prepared to care for our families and to help our neighbors so those with a diagnosis can live with dignity and purpose.”

The staggering costs associated with Alzheimer's disease are a surprise for many families. Because the disease requires around-the-clock assistance as it progresses, a recent study by the U.S. National Institutes of Health found costs-of-care for dementia are 57% higher than any other disease, including heart disease and cancer. Many family caregivers reduce their employment, change jobs, or leave the workforce entirely to care for a loved one, impacting the local economy and community life.

To navigate the journey, the Alzheimer's Alliance partners closely with families to plan for and provide care. Services include personal case management to make the most of eligible benefits, as well as programs to provide in-home care, overnight breaks, and a weekly day club social program. These respite options ease the financial and emotional burdens for caregivers while ensuring their loved one is well cared for and safe.

“Families are not alone in facing this disease,” said Luanne Harms, client services director at the Alzheimer's Alliance. “While there can be challenges, there is also a lot of hope. People are becoming more educated, and we live in a generous community that supports the safety and well-being of those who have been diagnosed. The most important thing is to be proactive so you can find support and avoid a potential crisis.”



For National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, the Alliance will be offering free memory screenings at the Sharon Community Clinic in Arp, a free medical clinic that operates the second Saturday of each month. Memory screenings will be available on Saturday, November 12, in collaboration with students from The University of Texas at Tyler School of Nursing. Free memory screenings are also available throughout the year at the Alliance through a partnership with the UT Tyler Memory Assessment and Research Center, directed by neuropsychologist Andrew Schmitt, Ph.D.

“Maintaining brain health is so important in reducing your risk as you age,” said Harms. “By making regular memory screenings part of your routine healthcare, you can monitor any changes over time.”

The Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County is proud to be one of the leading independent nonprofit organizations in the United States supporting those with dementia. For more information, call (903) 509-8323 or visit [www.alzalliance.org](http://www.alzalliance.org).

### **About the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County**

Founded in 1982, the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County is a local nonprofit organization committed to walking alongside all of those affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Our services include brain health advocacy, personal consultations and case management, caregiver support and resources, and professional and community education for a healthy East Texas.

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**Contact:** Leslie Lindsey, Community Outreach Coordinator  
(903) 509-8323 office  
(682) 365-3294 mobile  
[leslie@alzalliance.org](mailto:leslie@alzalliance.org)