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Statewide, 26 Communities Receive Grant to Implement Dementia-Friendly Action Priorities

MINNEAPOLIS (May 27, 2015)— In Minnesota, 26 communities and their lead organizations have been awarded a grant from ACT on Alzheimer's as they enter the final phase of a community engagement process to create and foster a dementia-friendly environment for everyone touched by the disease in their respective communities.

These communities are working to prepare Minnesota for the growing number of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Alzheimer's Association estimates there are 89,000 Minnesotans age 65 and older with the disease and thousands more with other dementias. And, nearly 250,000 family members and friends who are caregivers are experiencing the impacts first hand.

"The ACTion communities thrive on passion and commitment," said Michelle Barclay, executive co-lead for ACT on Alzheimer's. "They have accomplished the first phases of the community engagement process in which they convened community interests, assessed needs, and analyzed potential activities. These communities are now in phase 4 (ACT Together), ready to implement action priorities and achieve their vision of a dementia-friendly community." Action priorities range from community awareness campaigns and education events to compiling and distributing community resources to training volunteer Dementia Friends...and much more.

The 26 geographic-based communities and communities of shared ethnic and cultural interests receiving grants include Becker, Bemidji, Brainerd/Baxter, Cloquet, Detroit Lakes, East Iron Range (Aurora, Biwabik, and Hoyt Lakes), Edina, Forest Lake, Harmony, International Falls, Mankato/North Mankato, Marshall, Mille Lacs (Onamia and Isle School Districts), North Branch, Northfield, Paynesville area, Redwood Falls, Roseville, Sauk Rapids, St. Paul Northeast Neighborhoods, Stillwater area, and Willmar, as well as Centro (reaching Twin Cities Latino populations), Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller/NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center (reaching North Minneapolis populations), Minnesota Council of Churches, and St. Paul African-American Faith Community. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Local

spokespeople and stories are available for each of the communities. Contact Emily Farah-Miller at efmiller@metroaging.org or 651-245-2927)

ACT on Alzheimer's is a volunteer-driven, statewide collaboration preparing Minnesota for the personal, social, and budgetary impacts of Alzheimer's. Working with communities striving to become dementia-friendly is one of ACT's key strategies.

"As the population of Minnesota ages, it's important to build awareness of dementia and Alzheimer's," said Barclay. "Some of the most exciting practices will emerge from the work happening in communities. Having a dementia-friendly community means that care partners are supported and people with Alzheimer's can stay out of residential care settings longer. That helps everyone – families and taxpayers who pay for institutional care, employers who have workers trying to balance work and caregiving demands, and most importantly, the people living with dementia."

The grants awarded range from \$5,500 to \$16,000 and are funded through Blue Plus (an HMO affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota), the Medica Foundation, and Greater Twin Cities United Way and administered by the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging.

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More than 60 organizations and hundreds of individuals are partners in ACT on Alzheimer's. More information is available at www.ACTonALZ.org