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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Press are invited to a preview screening and reception to meet the producers and film participants on Tuesday, January 13 at WHYY at 5:30 p.m. For more information, please contact Paul Marotta or Charlene Peters at WHYY.*

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS TO AIR JANUARY 20 ON WHYY TV 12

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and fatal brain disease that destroys one's memory and identity. It can easily deplete a lifetime of savings in long-term health care costs, and leave care-giving families emotionally, physically and often, financially exhausted.

Today more than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's, but those numbers will soon rise dramatically. As the Baby Boom generation ages and more individuals are diagnosed, a frightening public health crisis looms. But has anyone noticed? In comparison to cancer, heart disease and AIDS, Alzheimer's disease greatly lags in research funding, media attention, and celebrity support. Has it become the forgotten disease?

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS will air on WHYY TV 12 on Tuesday, January 20 at 10:00 p.m. and is a new one-hour documentary that examines the personal and societal implications of the illness, while reviewing the latest research as scientists search for a cure. Through profiles of families living with Alzheimer's and interviews with 15 doctors and researchers from across the country, the documentary studies how this overlooked disease is threatening to bankrupt the American health system, economy and spirit. Emmy award-winning actor Edward Herrmann serves as the narrator.



The documentary takes a heart-breaking look at families whose lives have been devastated by Alzheimer's disease. Earl Towner's first symptoms of Alzheimer's appeared when, as a lifelong member of the Alaska National Guard, he attended a formal military function and wore his rank pin on the wrong side of his uniform jacket...an unimaginable mistake for a career military man. Now he and his wife Lyn have moved to a small, close-knit community where she can better care for his advancing needs. Calvin Hackney first noticed an issue with his wife Thelma when, after years as an excellent cook, she kept making mistakes in the kitchen. Like many partners, he reasoned her forgetfulness was simply a natural part of aging, but soon it became clear the situation was more serious. Don Deines knew his father died of Alzheimer's disease, but he never imagined he would suffer the same fate. Now his wife Judy has taken early retirement to care for him.

Through every personal story profiled in **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS**, you see not only the effects of the disease on the patient, but also the toll it takes on the family members left as caregivers. Studies show that the average life expectancy after diagnosis in the U.S. is eight years, with some living years longer. These families – and several others profiled in the program – bravely face a future where their dreams of retirement and “golden years” are shelved to make room for long-term care, financial instability.

From the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine's brain bank to a Mayo Clinic discussion group, **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS** takes an inside look at the latest search for a cure including interviews with some of the country's most respected doctors and researchers. The program reviews the history of the illness, including the first published case by German psychiatrist and neuropathologist Alois Alzheimer, and traces its destructive path through the brain.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS illustrates a host of challenges facing scientists and researchers working to find a cure. Research shows that Alzheimer's disease begins to kill brain cells silently in mid-life. In fact, by the time memory loss symptoms are first noticed, 50-75% of brain cells in the areas of the brain crucial to learning and memory are estimated to be lost. And yet with no clear diagnostic test before memory loss symptoms appear, early detection is extremely difficult. Doctors and researchers on the front lines lament the lack of attention and



funding in the face of its disastrous effects on the country's aging population. John Q. Trojanowski, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Institute on Aging at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, states, "There is something wrong with this equation. We are the richest country on earth facing the largest epidemic of a dementing illness ever in the history of civilization. And we need to see this as an urgent, actionable item."

But while no cure currently exists for this fatal disease, research shows that there are actions one can take to increase brain health and stave off the disease for as long as possible. Through animal trials, researchers have learned that staying active and eating a healthy diet promotes brain activity. Scientists also point to positive social connections and stimulating cognitive activities as having a protective effect against losing memory function.

About MetLife Foundation

Production support for **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS** was made possible by MetLife Foundation. MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation's goals are to strengthen communities, promote good health and improve education. MetLife Foundation has also supported Alzheimer's disease research and outreach activities for more than 20 years. For more information, please visit www.metlife.org.

About Motion Inc.

Motion Incorporated is an award-winning full-service film, video and new media production company with headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut. Motion Inc. has been delivering high quality video productions to its diverse clientele for over 25 years.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: FACING THE FACTS is distributed nationally by American Public Television (APT).

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