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Twelve Communities Receive Grants to Become 'Dementia-Friendly'

MINNEAPOLIS (April 3, 2014)— Twelve communities and their lead organizations have been awarded a grant from ACT on Alzheimer's to work toward becoming "dementia-friendly."

The new action communities are in Bemidji, Brainerd/Baxter, Detroit Lakes, Edina, Harmony, International Falls, Marshall, Northfield, Roseville and St. Paul's northeast neighborhoods, in addition to CLUES (reaching Latino populations) and the Minnesota Council of Churches. They join the seven pilot communities – Cambridge, Forest Lake, St. Louis Park, St. Paul Neighborhoods, Walker, Willmar and the Twin Cities Jewish Community.

The grantees will join grass-roots efforts statewide to prepare local communities for the growing number of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Alzheimer's Association estimates there are 88,000 Minnesotans age 65 and older with the disease and many thousands more with other dementias.

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

"As the population of Minnesota ages, it's becoming increasingly important to build support systems for people with dementia and Alzheimer's," said Olivia Mastry, executive lead for ACT on Alzheimer's. "Some of the most exciting innovations will emerge from this community work. Creating dementia-friendly communities means that caregivers are supported and people with dementia are able to live in the community and stay out of institutional care longer. That helps everyone – families and taxpayers who pay for

institutional care, employers who have workers trying to balance all the demands of caregiving and the individuals themselves.”

The grants are funded through Blue Plus, a subsidiary of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, the Medica Foundation, and Greater Twin Cities United Way. The next round of applications for funding will open April 15 and close June 3. Complete details and instructions are available at www.actonalz.org

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More than 60 organizations are partners in ACT on Alzheimer’s, dedicated to preparing Minnesota for the future and to creating supportive communities for persons and families touched by Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. More information is available at www.actonalz.org