



Alzheimer's research funding boost gives advocates new hope

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WASHINGTON (Gray DC) -- There's new hope in confronting Alzheimer's, an incurable disease that deeply affects memory. Washington Bureau Reporter Alana Austin reports new funding for research could lead scientists to a break-through.

"You could see the confusion and the frustration," explained Sue Wronsky, Alzheimer's Association volunteer.

For the Wronskys, it started with memory issues but deteriorated over the years. Sue says her mother Lynn's Alzheimer's diagnosis devastated their close-knit family.

"And that was definitely a difficult thing," said Sue.

Lynn spent a lifetime caring for others as a mother of seven and as an educator. But she needed help, just as five million other Americans do today.

"My parents were two amazing people - they were two of the best people in the world that you would ever know," said Sue.

The loss of her mother led Sue to volunteer for the Alzheimer's Association - she's now celebrating new research funding approved by the federal government.

Wronsky SOT: "It means a great deal to us when our legislators hear us"

Congress and the Trump administration recently approved \$414 million dollars for research.

Dr. Eliezer Masliah, director of the National Institutes of Health's Division of Neuroscience in Aging, says the disease is at epidemic-level proportions globally. But now he says this funding could be a game-changer.

"This has a tremendous impact. I mean - it's transformative and we're hoping that it would help accelerate and advance the goals that we have as part of the national plan for Alzheimer's disease."

Maslah says the additional funds could unlock new treatment options and one day, prevention. Right now, one of the most exciting developments is the exploration of "biomarkers". Maslah says drawing on recent genetic discoveries, scientists can now track changes in the brain in real-time and better identify those at risk of developing the disease.

"What we have found is the earlier we start, the better are the chances that the new experimental therapies might show some positive results," said Maslah.

Mike Tanner, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, doesn't dismiss the need for research, but favors the private sector leading the charge.

"We should actually force them to step up and spend the money themselves rather than rely on the taxpayers to do it for them."

The NIH says what they really need now is more people to participate in clinical trials, especially folks researchers can follow over many years.