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In a press conference at ASU's Biodesign Institute, U.S. Rep. Harry E. Mitchell, D-Ariz., made his formal announcement to join the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's disease. The press conference, which took place Aug. 28, was organized by the [Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium](#)

"I believe the best way we can honor life is by investing in science and ethical research," Mitchell says. "This task force provides me, and my colleagues, a unique opportunity to thoughtfully engage and support groundbreaking Alzheimer's research, especially the research being done here in Arizona."

The Congressional Task Force, a bipartisan panel made up of members of Congress, aims to focus national attention on Alzheimer's disease and the health care crisis it represents.

Mitchell pointed out some of the staggering statistics related to Alzheimer's disease, such as:

- Currently, 5 million Americans are afflicted with Alzheimer's.
- By the year 2050, that number is estimated to grow to 16 million people, at a cost of \$750 billion a year.
- Fifty percent of those age 85 and older will develop the disease.

"We have an impending national crisis related to Alzheimer's disease," says Stephen Albert Johnston, director of the Center for Innovations in Medicine at the [Biodesign Institute](#), who spoke at the event. "This crisis is at the personal level in terms of the people who get the disease, their families and caregivers, but also at the national level because of the economic impact this disease is having and will have. We are only going to solve this problem by collaboration on a larger scale."

Founded in 1998, the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium (AAC) is a nationally respected model of collaboration, combining the research and clinical expertise of a synergistic, statewide network of more than 100 researchers from seven world-class institutions, including ASU, [Banner Alzheimer's Institute](#)

, [Barrow Neurological Institute](#)

, [Mayo Clinic Arizona](#)

, Sun Health Research Institute, [Translational Genomics Research Institute](#) (TGen) and the

[University of Arizona](#)

ASU's efforts involve more than a dozen faculty from the Biodesign Institute, the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering, the College of Nursing and Healthcare Innovation, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and others working on a spectrum of diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic research projects aimed at easing the burden of Alzheimer's. Besides Johnston, the researchers include Heather Bimonte-Nelson, David Coon, Gerald Farin, Colleen Keller, Rosemary Renaut, Michael Sierks, Johannah Uriri-Glover and Evelyn Cesarotti.

The mission of the AAC is to link the state's resources and its strengths, to leverage policy changes at the national level, and to advance efforts to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. Arizona's strengths include brain imaging, genomics, computer science, clinical and neuropathological research, and behavioral neurosciences.

"Arizona, as we all know, is a retirement destination for many senior citizens, and so we can expect to incur a disproportionately high burden of the disease in the years to come," says professor Richard Caselli, chairman of neurology at Mayo Clinic Arizona. "This is an exciting time for Congressman Mitchell to join this task force. We have the nation's leading statewide collaboration in Alzheimer's research working together with its member institutions to develop therapies that will stop - and, indeed, to put an end - to Alzheimer's disease in the shortest time possible."

To find out more about the Arizona Alzheimer's Consortium's, visit the Web site [www.azalz.org](http://www.azalz.org)