

Alzheimer's group claims legislative foul

A group of Alaskans with family members who suffer from Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders are upset with how they have been treated by the Legislature this year. For several months the Alzheimer's Family Support Group has been working toward the establishment of adult day care centers for victims of Alzheimer's disease and those at risk for premature institutionalization.

"Day care centers for Alzheimer's patients have proven to be inexpensive, efficient, and effective programs that provide critically needed service," said Yvonne Foster, Director of Day Break Adult Day Care in Anchorage. "The frustrating thing is that adult day care centers will actually save the state money and the Legislature has given the program only minimal attention," Foster continued.

The Alzheimer's group claims that for every year that long-term institutional care is put off for each person by the availability of adult day care saves the state a minimum of \$40,000. The state is obligated to cover through Medicaid the expenses of institutional care at a minimum of \$140/day per person, equal to \$51,000 a year.

"At \$35/day for day care, compared to \$140/day for institutional care in Anchorage, every \$1 the state spends for adult day care means a hard cash savings of \$6," said Becky Clement, Co-Coordinator, Alzheimer's Family Support Group.

"The Legislature and Governor scream about budget reductions and cost savings, yet ignore this opportunity to really do something other than literally jaw-boning us to death," said Clement.