See photos of this event on our Photo Album Page .

La Plata, MD – Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-05) kicked off the 2005 Southern Maryland Memory Walk for Alzheimer's awareness in a ribbon cutting ceremony today. The walk was part of a nationwide effort to educate people about Alzheimer's disease. Today was the 17th annual Memory Walk and all funds raised at local event will be given to families and caregivers in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties. Nationwide, the Walk raises nearly $175 million.

"A crucial step in the fight against Alzheimer's disease is raising awareness. Tremendous progress is being made towards finding a cure and events like the Memory Walk help maintain that positive momentum," Hoyer said.

In 2004, Hoyer received the Alzheimer's Association's Humanitarian Award for his support of medical research. He works with the Association annually to help focus research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on Alzheimer's disease.

Today, 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's, a disease that affects brain cells related to memory, thought, and language. That number is expected to rise to between 11.2 and 13 million by 2050. The causes of Alzheimer's are still largely unknown, and there is no known cure. The average person with Alzheimer's lives between 8 and 20 years after the onset of symptoms.

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