

Illinois launches statewide Silver Search awareness campaign

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CHICAGO - A statewide public awareness campaign around the new Silver Search program kicks off today. Sixty percent of those with Alzheimer's will wander at some point during their diagnosis. Silver Search is a new tool in Illinois to help train law enforcement agencies across Illinois on how they can help you when a loved one with

Alzheimer's Association



dementia goes missing.

All new law enforcement officers will receive an expanded curriculum which includes warning signs to look for, communications skills and the criteria for a Silver Search, as well as procedures for activating a search. Over the next two years, approximately 2,500 officers and dispatchers will receive this training. Informational cards will also be distributed to every officer in Illinois. The public will also be trained on what to look for through radio and television PSAs, billboards, and social media marketing campaigns in both English and Spanish.

“It’s important to educate the general public about this new program,” Erna Colborn, Alzheimer’s Association Illinois Chapter Executive and Region 9 Leader said. “There are 220,000 people in Illinois living with Alzheimer’s disease. I am so thankful to the

Silver Search Task force for coming together and putting the safety of Illinois' most vulnerable citizens first.”

When applicable, Illinois State Police will activate the Endangered Missing Person Advisory. This advisory will alert the public through IDOT highway signs and Illinois Lottery Terminals in addition to the Silver Search website and social media channels.

"In any missing person case, time is of the essence. Nowhere is that more evident than situations where persons with Alzheimer's or dementia go missing," Illinois State Police Director Leo P. Schmitz said. "The Silver Search program provides an avenue for a quick and efficient reaction to these types of high risk situations. This program is a game changer by enhancing the tools that law enforcement can utilize to return this endangered population home safely," he continued.

After legislation backed by the Alzheimer's Association passed (PA 099-0322), the Silver Search Task Force was created. The Silver Search Task Force brings agencies and organizations together with the common goal of creating a Silver Search program and toolkit to assist in missing person cases involving those with Alzheimer's or dementia.

Members of this task force meet regularly to collaborate and utilize shared tools. *Participating members of this task force are:* Alzheimer's Association, Illinois State Police, Illinois Toll Highway Authority, Illinois Broadcasters Association, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Department on Aging, Illinois Department of Transportation, AARP, Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, Illinois Secretary of State, and Illinois Lottery.

The Silver Search public awareness campaign is made possible by the Tellabs Foundation.

For more: www.silversearchillinois.org