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Book by UC Santa Barbara Professor of Neuroscience Receives Award for Excellence in Medical Communication

UC Santa Barbara professor of neuroscience Kenneth S. Kosik's book, "The Alzheimer's Solution: How Today's Care is Failing Millions -- and How We Can Do Better," has been awarded the Will Solimene Award for Excellence in Medical Communication. The award is presented by the New England chapter of the American Medical Writers Association.

The book, published in 2010 and co-written with healthcare journalist Ellen Clegg, focuses on the aging Baby Boomer generation, a population that is both large and living longer -- factors that, when taken together, will likely prove to be too much for the current health care system to handle. According to the latest statistics from the American Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 5.4 million people have the disease, with 14.9 million unpaid caregivers and \$183 billion in annual costs.

"In the absence of a cure, our only option is to implement a set of risk reduction measures, and with these changes in lifestyle, it is likely that we can push back the age at which the disease strikes, and thereby lower the number of cases that will soon swell the demand for assisted living and the many other services required by those whose cognition is impaired," said Kosik, who is the Harriman Professor of Neuroscience Research in the Department of Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology, and co-director of UCSB's Neuroscience Research Institute. He is also a

member of the Tau Consortium, a UC San Francisco-based group that is working toward a cure for disorders related to the protein tau, of which Alzheimer's disease is one.

"The Alzheimer's Solution" outlines various aspects of life with Alzheimer's disease, from the scientific and economic, to the emotional and social, and urges people who are or may be affected by the disease to take a proactive stand against it.

"I've seen the toll that Alzheimer's disease takes on sufferers and on families, and I wanted to understand why the field seemed stuck -- and whether there were any tactics that could be adopted to give people better odds and better outcomes," said Clegg.

In the book, Kosik and Clegg propose community-based "brain-shops," cognitive care centers that could potentially impact the problem, working from a standpoint of prevention for the hundreds of thousands who are expected to be diagnosed with the disease in the coming decade. Kosik is the founder of the Cottage Center for Brain Fitness in Santa Barbara.

The Will Solimene award, presented every two years, is given in recognition for outstanding work in medical, biomedical, and health communication by New England residents.

"This award will hopefully bring greater attention to what people can do right now to reduce their risk of getting Alzheimer's disease," said Kosik.

"The Alzheimer's Solution: How Today's Care is Failing Millions -- and How We Can Do Better," is available at the Cottage Center for Brain Fitness in Santa Barbara, and also online.

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