

2020 STATE PRIORITIES

The Alzheimer's Association advocates to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, to provide enhanced care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

1

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS, EARLY DETECTION, AND DIAGNOSIS

The Alzheimer's Association supports HB 456/SB 725, which mandates that the State Department of Health, in partnership with the Department of Aging, the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council, and the Alzheimer's Association, must incorporate information in its relevant public health outreach programs to educate health care providers and the public.

This education includes the importance of early detection and timely diagnosis of cognitive impairment, the value of an annual wellness visit for cognitive health, and increased understanding and awareness of early warning signs of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia, with emphasis particularly among persons in diverse communities who are at greater risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

2

BUILD A DEMENTIA-CAPABLE WORKFORCE

The Alzheimer's Association supports HB 1168/SB 897 that requires dementia training for residential service agencies (RSAs). An RSA is an agency that provides supportive home care services, such as assistance with activities of daily living, housekeeping services, and some nursing services. An RSA may also provide one or more home care services or medical equipment (e.g., oxygen, wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds).

In Maryland, there are over 1,200 RSAs, yet these agencies who work with individuals experiencing Alzheimer's and other dementia, have no required training. This legislation, filling a gap in care, mandates training based on the Alzheimer's Association 2018 Dementia Care Practice Recommendations including person-centered focus, assessment and care planning, medical management, and dementia-related behaviors.

3

INCREASE ACCESS TO HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

The Alzheimer's Association supports SB 539/HB 839 "The Time to Care Act"—also known as Paid Family Leave—which would establish a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, similar to unemployment insurance. A fund pool, into which both employees and employers contribute, would provide workers up to 12 weeks of leave with partial wage replacement when a critical need arises. The latest data from the Alzheimer's Association shows that there are 293,000 caregivers in Maryland who provide over 334 million total hours of unpaid care resulting in over \$4.2 billion in value. Marylanders need dedicated, compensated time to care. No one should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

4

PROVIDER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Alzheimer's Association supports SB 501/HB 998 which fully funds the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MLARP), and seeks to expand loan opportunities so that clinicians trained in Maryland stay in Maryland. MLARP aids providers who in turn, must commit to working in areas with a lack of primary care providers and a high percentage of elderly residents. As the number of Marylanders with Alzheimer's disease is expected to grow by 18% by 2025, this legislation could help expand the physician workforce and meet needs of today's older population.

We welcome the work of the VIRGINIA I. JONES ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE & RELATED DISORDERS COUNCIL, which works across Maryland, and whose duties include: improving and enhancing quality of life and support and services for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and their families; updating and advocating for the Maryland State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders; and advising the Governor and General Assembly on policy, funding and other issues related to Alzheimer's.