

*Alzheimer's is a growing public health crisis and state governments must take bold action. Effectively implementing and updating State Alzheimer's Plans and supporting other policies will reduce the long-term impact of the disease on state budgets, and improve the lives of individuals living with dementia and their family caregivers.*

# 1

## **An Act to Improve Alzheimer's and Dementia Care in Senior Care Options Programs (H.739/ S.415)**

*Sponsors: Rep. Danielle Gregoire, Sen. Jason Lewis*

This legislation would require all Massachusetts Senior Care Options (SCO) plans, serving our most vulnerable populations, to provide comprehensive care planning services to SCO members that have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias pose significant challenges and costs to families and the healthcare system. Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in America with most of these costs borne by Medicare and Medicaid.

Comprehensive care planning approaches are effective in reducing unnecessary re-hospitalizations and ED visits, improving the management of other chronic illnesses and reducing premature nursing home placement, helping both patient and family and reducing overall healthcare costs.

# 2

## **An Act Relative to Early-Onset Alzheimer's Disease (H.722)**

*Sponsor: Rep. Bruce Ayers*

This legislation would ensure services provided through the MassHealth Frail Elder Home and Community-Based Services Waiver shall be made available to persons diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease regardless of their age, if they are otherwise eligible for such services.

Approximately 200,000 people under the age of 65 are living with younger-onset Alzheimer's and related dementias. Massachusetts Medicaid—called MassHealth—operates the Frail Elderly Waiver specifically to help residents who require nursing home level care to receive health care and ongoing support services in their homes or community living residences instead of in a nursing home.

Those with younger-onset Alzheimer's or related dementias younger age often preclude them from appropriate access to critical services like the MassHealth Frail Elder Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver.

## 3

**An Act to  
Establish  
the Family  
Caregiver  
Tax Credit  
(H.3043/S.788)**

*Sponsors: Sen. Jason Lewis, Rep. David Rogers*

The legislation will provide family caregivers with an income tax credit to cover expenses incurred by a taxpayer for the care and support of a qualifying family member. The amount of the credit is equal to 100% of eligible expenses, with a maximum allowable credit of \$1,500 per year.

In homes and communities across the United States, millions of Americans quietly care for older parents, spouses and other loved ones, often with dementia, helping them to remain at home. There are more than 844,000 family caregivers in Massachusetts (340,000 of which are caring for someone with dementia) whose unpaid care totals more than \$11 billion every year.

Family caregivers help their loved ones with everything from bathing and dressing to preparing meals and administering medication, usually while also working full- or part- time jobs. This bill, if passed, would help make family caregivers' big responsibilities a little bit easier.

## 4

**FY2022 State  
Budget  
Appropriation  
for an Alzheimer's  
Public Awareness  
and Education  
Campaign  
(Budget Item:  
4513-1111)**

*Sponsor: Rep. Danielle Gregoire, Sen. Pat Jehlen*

We are seeking \$150,000 for the FY2022 budget. In line with the recommendations from the existing State Alzheimer's Disease Plan, and the Centers for Disease Control Healthy Brain Initiative, we support state funding for a Public Awareness Campaign on the warning signs of Alzheimer's and related dementia. This item has been funded in recent fiscal years.

The Alzheimer's Association has used these resources to connect with underserved African-American and Latino communities across the Commonwealth who are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia.

**COVID-19 Response:**

We understand the devastating toll that this pandemic has had on our vulnerable population. Since Spring 2020, we have advocated to protect long term care communities where many individuals living with dementia reside and unfortunately have been at a higher risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19. Residents with dementia are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 due to their typical age, their significantly increased likelihood of coexisting chronic conditions, and the community nature of these settings. The Alzheimer's Association released important guidance urging policymakers to implement new policy solutions to address the dramatic and evolving issues impacting nursing homes and assisted living communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. As this pandemic evolves, we will continue to advocate for all those living with Alzheimer's or other dementia and their families.

**For more information regarding the Alzheimer's Association's 2021-2022 Legislative Priorities in Massachusetts please contact Chelsea Gordon, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy at [cgordon@alz.org](mailto:cgordon@alz.org)**