

June 7, 2021

Secretary Mark Ghaly, MD, MPH
California Health and Human Services Agency

Re: American Rescue Plan Act – Medicaid HCBS Spending Plan

Dear Secretary Ghaly,

The Alzheimer's Association commends the California Health and Human Services Agency for their collective work to hasten recovery for our high-risk population through a combination of financing initiatives outlined in the Agency's American Rescue Plan Act Medicaid HCBS Spending Plan released last week. Specifically, we applaud the Administration for close adherence to the thoughtfully developed stakeholder recommendations contained in the Master Plan for Aging, the MPA LTSS Report and the Alzheimer's Prevention and Preparedness Task Force.

California urgently needs a two-pronged approach to simultaneously: 1) fast-track recovery for the 65+ population hardest hit by the global pandemic – older adults and persons with dementia who represent 73.4% of California COVID-19 fatalities, and 2) accelerate capacity building and infrastructure development for 2025 when 840,000 Californians will be living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

COVID-19 Facts:

- ✓ Approximately one in five California COVID-19 deaths were reported in long-term care facilities where nearly half of the population has dementia – the need for home and community-based alternatives for this population is vital
- ✓ Already the 3rd leading cause of death in California, Alzheimer's experienced a dramatic 18.8% increase as a cause of death in 2020
- ✓ A study led by Case Western Reserve University researchers found that patients with dementia were at a significantly increased risk for COVID-19—and the risk was higher still for African Americans with dementia

In tandem with the Legislature's proposed budget developed jointly by the Senate and Assembly, the Alzheimer's Association supports this combined package to reduce systemic inequities, build local capacity and strengthen community infrastructure.

For the 1.8 million Californians today living with Alzheimer’s disease or caring for a loved one with dementia, we want to underscore the immediate need for the following:

American Recovery Plan Act/Medicaid HCBS Spending Plan

DHCS	25,000,000	“Dementia Aware” Medi-Cal provider payment incentives to evaluate cognitive health linked to medical education/physician training
DHCS CDA	100,000,000	Medicare Partnerships and Shared Savings in partnership with local partners to develop innovative approaches to coordinated, integrated care for duals.
DHCS	85,000,000	Eliminate Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver Wait List
DHCS	5,000,000	Caregiver Resource Centers – enhanced respite and other supports.
OSHPD	100,000,000	HCBS Clinical Workforce – CNA, LVN, RN
CDA	10,000,000	Restoration of Alzheimer’s Day Care Resource Center (ADCRC) sites
CDA	150,000,000	Direct Care Workforce (non IHSS): skill building, career pathways, etc. This is a statewide training and stipend program for CBAS, MSSP and other HCBS settings.
DSS	68,400,000	Specialized IHSS Upskilling Pilots to address recipients with Alzheimer’s or dementia among others

The Alzheimer’s Association is committed to working with the Administration and the Legislature to fast-track recovery, build system capacity and develop local infrastructure for all Californians affected by Alzheimer’s and their caregivers.

Sincerely,
 Susan DeMarois, Public Policy Director
 Jared Giarrusso, California Government Affairs Director

cc:
 Director Will Lightbourne, DHCS
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 Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, Assembly Speaker
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 Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, MD, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 Chair