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**SB 725 Maryland Department of Health - Public Health Outreach Programs -
Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Other Types of Dementia
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
March 12, 2020
SUPPORT**

Good Afternoon Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. As you may know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the Free State, encompassing almost 900,000 members. AARP MD supports **SB 725 Maryland Department of Health - Public Health Outreach Programs - Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Other Types of Dementia.**

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

HB 725 requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA), the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council, and the Alzheimer's Association, to incorporate information regarding cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and other types of dementia into re public health outreach programs to educate health care providers and increase public understanding and awareness.

AARP conducted a study to explore the level of awareness of facts and myths about Alzheimer's disease and dementia among adults age 18 and older. More than nine in 10 (92%) adults believe that Alzheimer's disease is a serious problem in our country today and two-thirds (68%) of adults said they know someone who has had Alzheimer's disease or dementia or another disease causing cognitive decline.

In addition, more than 16 million Americans serve as unpaid caregivers for people with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, and half have been doing so for at least four years. These family members and friends face the normal stresses of caregiving plus other, unique challenges.

AARP
Real Possibilities

Most distressing can be having to learn how to interact with a loved one whose cognitive decline results in erratic behavior and personality changes.

For six decades, AARP has focused on finding solutions that improve the lives of older Americans, and we will continue to do so as the challenges that each generation faces change. Only 12 years from now, the first millennials will be turning 49, Gen Xers will begin turning 65 and the first boomers will be turning 84 — an age at which dementia is most prevalent. By making this investment, our hope is that, by then, we can add finding a treatment and ultimately a cure for dementia to the list of battles we have won.

As AARP continues its research, commitment to public outreach, AARP also believes that state and local government should: support prevention and early identification; enhance quality of care; enhance supports for individuals and families; enhance public awareness; and improve data capacity to track progress. For these reasons AARP ask the Committee for a FAVORABLE report on SB 725.