



# Maryland Commission on Caregiving

## *“The Voice of the Caregiver”*

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February 12, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving is pleased to submit **this letter of support for HB456**, “Maryland Department of Health – Public Outreach Programs – Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia.” If passed into law, HB456 would bring about more effective outreach among healthcare providers and the public by leveraging and coordinating the resources of the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Aging, the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Council, and the Alzheimer’s Association.

HB456 is designed to benefit individuals in Maryland through creating greater awareness and understanding of dementia, promoting the value of early detection and diagnosis of dementia, and reducing the risk of cognitive decline among diverse communities who are at increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia. Early diagnosis of dementia can provide individuals affected by dementia and their caregivers with better access to medical treatments and more time to plan for future care needs. Moreover, HB456 would bring about more targeted outreach to the African American and Latino communities who experience a 50% greater risk for developing Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

Serving as “the voice of the Maryland caregiver,” the Maryland Commission on Caregiving is charged with recommending policies that positively impact family caregivers, soliciting and responding to their concerns and acknowledging their contributions. Family caregivers provide the majority of long-term care for their loved ones who live with dementia, which involves hands-on personal care and financial support and often lasts for multiple years due to the progressive and chronic nature of the disease. Passage of HB456 would reduce the burden placed upon caregivers who assist the 110,000 individuals affected by dementia through greater awareness of the disease and its early diagnosis.

The Maryland Commission on Caregiving works to ensure that caregivers across the lifespan are equipped with the resources needed to provide safe care to their loved ones across the state of Maryland. Passage of HB456 would support such efforts which is why the Commission respectfully urges a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Eastman, Chair  
Maryland Commission on Caregiving