



**Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association  
Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters**

On

**HB 1168 - Maryland Department of Health - Residential Service Agencies -  
Training Requirements**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk,

My name is Ilene Rosenthal and I am the Director of Programs for the Alzheimer's Association in our Greater Maryland chapter. I also served as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Aging under Secretary Lawlah during the O'Malley Administration. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about HB 1168, legislation which requires Residential Service Agencies (RSAs) to provide dementia training to their workers.

There are over 110,000 Marylanders with Alzheimer's disease, a figure that is expected to grow by nearly 20 percent in the next five years. As the population of older adults continues to grow, there will be an increased demand for home and community-based services. The workforce that staffs these services helps to shape the daily lives of persons with dementia.

To best serve those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias—one in ten persons aged 65+ and one in three persons aged 85+—we must have a workforce properly trained in dementia care practice. *Maryland regulations require dementia training annually for staff in nursing facilities and assisted living. **Yet there are no specific dementia training requirements in regulations governing staff who provide home care for over 1000 Maryland RSA providers.***

The Alzheimer's Association has been a leader in advocating for quality care for individuals living with dementia. The Association's 2018 Dementia Care Practice Recommendations outline recommendations for quality care practices based on a comprehensive review of current evidence, best practice and expert opinion. These recommendations have been developed to better define quality care across all care settings and throughout the disease course. They are intended for professional care providers who work with individuals living with dementia and their families in residential and community-based care settings. Providing care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia can be very challenging; it is important that all staff understand these quality care practices.

HB 1168 would require each residential service agency to ensure that supervisory and direct care staff receive five hours of in-person or online dementia training and two hours of continuing education each year, including training regarding Alzheimer's disease and dementia; person-centered care; assessment and care planning; activities of daily living; and dementia-related behaviors and communication. **The training is necessary, affordable—you have written testimony from online provider Harrington Software saying that, with a bulk purchase, an Assisted Living Facility recently paid \$8.25 per person—and will significantly improve the quality of care for our seniors in need.**

I urge you to provide a favorable report for HB 1168.