

NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair
Education, Business and
Administration Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 120
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3686 · 410-841-3686
800-492-7122 Ext. 3686
Fax 301-858-3670 · 410-841-3670
Nancy.King@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 505 – Department of Aging –
Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation Programs**

February 24, 2022

Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

More than 130,000 Marylanders are currently living with Dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. In 2021, these individuals were supported by 238,000 caregivers – family, friends, and loved ones – who provided more than 364,000 hours of unpaid care. These caregivers provide an incredibly valuable source of support to those suffering with dementia without the benefit of support, pay or respite and many have no plans for their loved one's care beyond the next day.

Senate Bill 505 would establish a Dementia Care Navigator program, including the creation of Dementia Care Coordinator in the State Department of Aging, and Dementia Care Navigators within each of the state's 20 Area Agencies on Aging. The Dementia Care Navigator program would be responsible for supporting family caregivers in their jurisdictions, helping develop plans for their loved ones' care, connecting them with support groups and other resources, and assisting in efforts to make their communities more inclusive to people with dementia. The navigators would also help connect family members who have concerns about their loved ones' cognitive abilities, with providers who can conduct cognitive screenings and diagnose the disease earlier. This early detection and diagnosis can provide additional options for treatment and disease management.

This legislation also sets aside funds for a position within the state Department of Aging to coordinate and oversee the work of the caregiving specialists. Providing a state wide coordinator is essential to ensuring that our local navigators are able to work collaboratively with their colleagues state-wide, connecting those suffering with the disease with locally available resources as well as those that might exist outside of their local area but are available within the state and region.

I am offering an amendment with this bill that corrects some drafting changes and conforms the bill to the House cross-file.

Being able to stay in their home is so important for dementia patients, as a move to an unfamiliar setting can cause further disorientation, but caregivers need resources and support for them to be able accomplish this goal. Senate Bill 505 with amendments will provide that support to caregivers, and so I respectfully request a favorable report.