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MAYOR

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**HB 614**

February 23, 2023

**TO:** Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 614 – Department of Aging - Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation Program

**POSITION: Support**

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** with House Bill (HB) 614.

HB 614 enables the Maryland Department of Aging and local Area Agencies on Aging to respond to the growing number of Marylanders with Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders (ADRD). The bill creates a dementia care navigation program within the Department and the Area Agencies. The navigators will assist and guide caregivers of persons with dementia, build community awareness of dementia, and strengthen the ability of Area Agencies on Aging to provide services to the growing number of Marylanders with ADRD and their family caregivers.

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 110,000 Marylanders 65 and over had Alzheimer's Disease in 2020, and that this number will grow to 130,000 by 2025. The data further indicates that the burden of this disease falls disproportionately on minority communities; the Alzheimer's Association estimates that older African Americans are about two times more likely than older whites to have Alzheimer's or other dementias, and that older Hispanics are about one to one-half times more likely than older whites to have Alzheimer's or other dementias.

HB 614 guarantees that the dementia navigation program will be implemented upon appropriation of funds by the Governor. This provision of the bill is critical, to assure that the program has sufficient funding to provide a visible and valuable service across the State.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 614.