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HB 614 Department of Aging - Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation Programs

FAVORABLE

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 23, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP is the largest membership-based organizations for individuals 50 and over in the United States and has over 870,000 members in Maryland. AARP Maryland supports **HB 614 Department of Aging – Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation.**

HB 614 establishes the position of Dementia Care Coordinator in the Department of Aging to oversee dementia care navigation programs. It also requires the Coordinator to train the staff of dementia care navigation programs, disseminate best practices and submit a report, by October 1, 2024 and each year thereafter, to the Governor, the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate on the services provided; and requiring the Department to publish a certain report on its website.

According to the Center for Disease Control about one in five older Americans has a mental health condition. Among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, the most common are depression, anxiety, and other neurocognitive impairments. In addition, one in ten Americans according to Alzheimer's have dementia. By 2030, in Maryland it is expected to increase by 30 percent.

Mental disorders seldom occur in isolation and can often lead to serious physical health issues. However, they are frequently undiagnosed or misdiagnosed in older patients. Older adults are more likely than younger adults to receive inappropriate or inadequate services related to brain health.

HB 614 also states that the work of the dementia care coordinator and the dementia care navigation programs shall be guided by the recommendations of The Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council. The Council beginning in fiscal 2023 is a collaborative of state agencies, human services professionals, health care professionals and stakeholders from around the state working in areas of dementia services and brain health related to the human cognition. The council's focus is to examine the needs of individuals with Alzheimer's and related disorders, their caregivers and to Identify methods through which the State can most effectively and efficiently assist in meeting those need. And finally, to develop and promote strategies to encourage brain health and reduce cognitive decline.

For these reason, AARP Maryland respectfully request a favorable report for HB 614. If there are questions or follow up needed, please contact me at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.