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Bill: HB 189 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Personal Care Aides - Wage Reports

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: March 20, 2024

On behalf of the more than 110,000 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's and the nearly 250,000 caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association supports *HB 189 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Personal Care Aides - Wage Reports* and urges a favorable report.

HB 189 will require residential service agencies (RSA) to submit annual reports to the Maryland Department of Labor documenting the RSA's average wage rate and highest and lowest wage rates for personal care aides. Additionally, the bill, as amended, includes uncodified language requiring the Maryland Department of Health to report to the General Assembly within 180 days following the release of a proposed CMS rule that, among other things, will outline regular analyses of Medicaid reimbursement rates.

According to a study published in July 2023, Maryland is amongst the states with the highest prevalence for Alzheimer's dementia in people 65 and older.¹ Specifically, for U.S. counties with a population of 10,000 or more individuals age 65 and older, both Baltimore City and Prince George's County fall in the top 5 jurisdictions with the highest estimated prevalence rates, 16.6% and 16.1% respectively.²

As the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease increases, so does the demand for additional workforce involved in caring for those living with the disease. Personal care aides are an essential part of our care ecosystem. However, availability of these aides is expected to decline if no action is taken to address recruitment and retention. This bill works to address this issue by providing data that will inform policy decisions to ensure there are sufficient workers to care for people living with dementia and other vulnerable adults.

The Alzheimer's Association is committed to strengthening the dementia care workforce and urges a favorable report on HB 189. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org or 410-921-9005 with any questions.

¹ Dhana K, Beck T, Desai P, Wilson RS, Evans DA, Rajan KB. Prevalence of Alzheimer's disease dementia in the 50 US states and 3142 counties: A population estimate using the 2020 bridged-race postcensal from the National Center for Health Statistics. *Alzheimer's Dement.* 2023; 19: 4388–4395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.13081>

² Ibid.