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Bill: SB 197 - Residential Service Agencies - Reimbursement - Personal Assistance Services

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: February 8, 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 *SB 197 - Residential Service Agencies - Reimbursement - Personal Assistance Services* and urges a favorable report.

SB 197 authorizes the Maryland Department of Health to reimburse a residential service agency for personal assistance services only if the personal assistance services are provided by an individual classified as an employee.

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 the workforce involved in caring for those living with the disease. Personal care aides are an essential part of our care ecosystem. Ensuring that their careers include social safety net benefits, such as sick leave, will not only benefit the individual but will ensure there are both consistent workers and a sufficient workforce 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 SB 197. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org 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.