



**Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association
Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters**

On

**SB 725 - Public Health Outreach Programs - Cognitive Impairment,
Alzheimer's Disease, and Other Types of Dementia**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Vice-Chair Kagan,

My name is Eric Colchamiro, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB725.

This legislation requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), in partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA), the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council, and the Alzheimer's Association, to incorporate specified information regarding cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and other types of dementia into its relevant public health outreach programs to educate health care providers and increase public understanding and awareness.

This is legislation which sets up a framework for the government to work more strategically, to reduce the burden cost, and impact that this cruel disease has on over 110,000 Marylanders.

A few specific areas this bill would address:

- **Risk Reduction** - A growing body of research points says that—while there is not a cure—there are medical conditions directly connected to Alzheimer's, including: hypertension, obesity, and smoking. Address them in your lifestyle, and you reduce your risk of acquiring Alzheimer's;
- **Early detection and diagnosis** – As many as half of people with Alzheimer's are not diagnosed, and less than half of the diagnosed are unaware of the diagnosis. Training to health care providers on the warning signs of dementia and the benefits of early detection and timely diagnosis can help improve outcomes for individuals, families, and caregivers;
- **Outreach to individuals in diverse communities** – African Americans are twice as likely as Caucasians to have Alzheimer's, and Latinos are 50 percent more likely.

It is time that we think strategically to reduce the burden, impact, and costs of care of this cruel disease. This legislation, if passed into law, sets a course for effectively addressing Alzheimer's as a chronic disease. The combined resources and expertise of these entities offers an opportunity to educate providers, inform the public, and engage diverse communities disproportionately impacted by this disease about risk reduction.

Thank you for your time. I urge a favorable report on SB725.

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