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Testimony of Marlyn Taylor on SB 313 - Maryland Department of Health - Public Health Outreach Programs – Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease, and Other Types of Dementia

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Pinsky and Vice-Chair Kagan,

My name is Marlyn Taylor, and I am the Family Care Coordinator for the Alzheimer’s Association in Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 313.

I joined the Alzheimer’s Association because I wanted to be in a position to help families navigate to programs and services that meet their individual needs. No one in my family has dementia, but as I work with families and conduct care consultations, I hear their burdens and see the stress and challenges they face as a result of Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

This legislation includes a specific focus on outreach to the Black and Latino communities, who are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia. That is a big part of what I do; this includes directly engaging African American churches about the Association’s resources including our 24-7 helpline for families. It includes our African American Community Forum on Memory Loss, which attracts 400 participants each year. And it includes the first virtual Latino Summit, which provided valuable information regarding how Alzheimer’s affects the Latino community, and highlighted the many Spanish language programs and resources.

Although we are still learning why the Black and Latino communities have higher rates of Alzheimer’s disease, we know that they have higher rates of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol which have been linked to Alzheimer’s.

But I am pleased to be part of the solution, and I am also pleased that this bill requires coordinated outreach to clinicians, as well as effective outreach to the public—not limited to Blacks and Latinos—which is really important too.

I urge a favorable report on SB 313.