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HB 166 Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia – Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022)

Health and Government Operations Committee

February 3, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates, and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health, mental illness, and substance use. We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 166.

The Dementia Services Act of 2022 would establish and mandate funding for a full-time Director of Dementia Services Coordination at the Maryland Department of Health. The position would be responsible for the coordination of services affecting Marylanders with dementia and their caregivers and families, including: implementing the Maryland Alzheimer's state plan managing the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council; identifying and supporting the development of dementia-specific training; and applying for grants to expand and improve services for Marylanders with Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

There is precedent for this position – if enacted, Maryland's point person on dementia would join similar roles in 16 other states, including Virginia and the District of Columbia. This role would work across government to aid the 110,000 Marylanders with dementia and their loved ones. Our state spends over \$1.2 billion in Medicaid funding on this chronic disease; it is essential that we begin to build our infrastructure to help Marylanders in need.

MHAMd respectfully urges this committee to return a favorable report on HB 166. We spend over a billion dollars on this disease, and we see strong benefit in Maryland having a point person specifically working to address Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias.

For more information contact:

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