

VIRGINIA I. JONES ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS COUNCIL

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March 30, 2023

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 228 (3rd) – Department of Aging - Long-Term Care and Dementia Care Navigation Program.

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council (the Council) extends its support for Senate Bill (SB) 228 (3rd), titled "Department of Aging - Long-Term Care and Dementia Care Navigation Program." SB 228 (3rd) establishes long-term care and dementia care navigation programs at each Area Agency on Aging in Maryland, requires funds be appropriated for the programs, and charges the Maryland Department of Aging with statewide program oversight.

The Council extends its support for SB 228 (3rd), as it directly supports the Council's charge and recommendations put forth by the Council. Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRDs) are a complex and costly set of conditions associated with high healthcare costs, premature long-term care placement, medical complications, reduced quality of life, and caregiver burden. An estimated 110,000 Marylanders were living with Alzheimer's disease in 2020, and prevalence is expected to increase to 130,000 by 2025. Maryland Medicaid program spending on care for people with Alzheimer's disease surpassed \$1.2 billion in 2020 and spending is projected to increase 24.7% by 2025. Approximately 242,000 family caregivers in Maryland were providing care for people with dementia in 2021, and contributed 371 million hours of unpaid care, amounting to an estimated total economic value of \$6.8 billion.¹ Enhancing the availability of care coordination services, including identifying and treating cognitive and behavioral symptoms, person-centered care planning, help facilitating access or referrals to needed care or services, and provision of support to persons living with dementia and their caregivers has the potential to improve care, promote aging-in-place, and reduce health care costs.

The Council respectfully urges this Committee to approve SB 228 (3rd) as an important public health measure to better assess, address, and coordinate care for Maryland residents with ADRD. In doing so, this bill will support the goals of *the Maryland State Plan to Address ADRD: 2022-2026*, will aid in advancing dementia education for Area Agencies on Aging staff, will provide local specialized care navigation support, and will enhance the equitable delivery of dementia coordination services throughout Maryland.

Sincerely,



Halima Amjad, MD, PhD, MPH, Chair, Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council

¹ Alzheimer's Association. 2022 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures. *Alzheimers Dementia* 2022;18.
<https://www.alz.org/media/documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>