

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

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March 4, 2025

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The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 748 – Public Health - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias - Information on Prevalence and Treatment/ House Bill 1004 – Public Health - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias - Information on Prevalence and Treatment – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Virginia I Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council (the Council) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 748/ House Bill (HB) 1004 – Public Health - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias - Information on Prevalence and Treatment. This bill would require the Council to work in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health to provide healthcare provider training on available tools and Medicare benefits to facilitate timely cognitive impairment diagnosis and support and treatments approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It also creates an Alzheimer's Data dashboard to report information on the prevalence, hospitalizations, and demographics related to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD), in collaboration with the Maryland Health Data Exchange.

Currently, an estimated 127,200¹ Marylanders are living with ADRD. Maryland is estimated to have the highest prevalence of ADRD in the nation, and Baltimore City and Prince George's County are among the highest prevalence cities/counties nationwide. The exact numbers of individuals and families affected by ADRD in Maryland are not known, nor is the impact of this progressive, disabling condition on our hospitals and health systems. At the same time, health care provider and public knowledge of ADRD, including warning signs, tools to make a diagnosis, and available treatments, is limited. This bill will address these important issues and align with goals and strategies that the Council laid out in our 2022-2026 Maryland State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias.

¹ Dhana, K., Beck, T., Desai, P., Wilson, R. S., Evans, D. A., & Rajan, K. B. (2023). 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 & dementia : the journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, 19(10), 4388–4395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.13081>

The Council fully supports SB 748/ HB 1004 because it will expand public access to ADRD prevalence and hospitalization data, thereby helping to guide the work being done by doctors, researchers, and public health policy makers in supporting the ADRD community in Maryland. This data will assist in identifying trends and disparities in how ADRD affects different communities in different ways. Additionally, broadening access to ADRD data will help ensure that resources are allocated efficiently to the communities most impacted by the disease. This data will be an essential asset in conversations about funding for research, caregiver assistance, and healthcare services. This bill could be strengthened by incorporating the collection of disaggregated data on the various types of dementia. It will also advance much-needed health care provider education on ADRD.

For these reasons, the Council respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 748/ HB 1004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Halima Amjad', written in a cursive style.

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