



Bill: SB 129 - Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting

Committee: Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: January 30, 2025

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association supports SB 129 - Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting. This bill will require the Maryland Commission on Health Equity, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health, to establish a committee to identify the 10 widest disparities in health care quality, access, or outcomes for vulnerable populations, and review each health equity report submitted by a licensed hospital in Maryland.

Optimizing health for Marylanders requires eliminating disparities and addressing social determinants of health. Focusing on communities at greatest risk and eliminating barriers to quality health care services will deliver significant results. Cognitive health is no exception and should be included in these discussions. Alzheimer's and other dementias disproportionately affect Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indian/Alaska Natives, members of the LGBTQ+ community and women.

Additionally, several studies demonstrate the impact of inequities on cognitive decline. Experiences of structural, interpersonal and institutional racism are associated with lower memory scores and worse cognition in midlife and old age, especially among Black adults.¹ Socioeconomic deprivation, including neighborhood disadvantages and persistent low wages, is associated with higher dementia risk, lower cognitive performance and faster memory decline.² We must collaborate to develop initiatives to address these disparities.

SB 129 builds upon the State's existing efforts to address health equity, and will provide additional data to inform future programs and policies. The Alzheimer's Association urges a favorable report on SB 129. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ Klee M, Leist AK, Veldsman M, Ranson JM, Llewellyn DJ. Socioeconomic Deprivation, Genetic Risk, and Incident Dementia. *Am J Prev Med*. 2023 May;64(5):621-630. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2023.01.012. Epub 2023 Mar 6. PMID: 37085245; PMCID: PMC10126314.

² Longoria, A. J., Brinson, Z. S., Carlew, A. R., Cullum, M., De Lemos, J. A., Goette, W., Lacritz, L., & Rossetti, H. (2022). Allostatic load and the influence of economic adversity and neighborhood disadvantage on cognitive function in a multiethnic cohort. *Alzheimer S & Dementia*, 18(S7). <https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.068217>