ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

Bill: HB 1004 - Public Health - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias - Information on Prevalence and Treatment
Committee: Health and Government Operations
Position: Favorable
Date: February 28, 2025

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research, we support HB 1004 - *Public Health - Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias - Information on Prevalence and Treatment*. This bill will establish an annual data reporting requirement on dementia prevalence in Maryland, as well as ensure that information on treatments approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Alzheimer's disease and other dementia are included in relevant public health outreach programs.

Dementia is a growing fiscal and public health concern in Maryland. In 2020, Maryland saw over $1.23 *billion* in Medicaid costs caring for people living with Alzheimer's - a figure projected to rise 25% by 2025.[1] Based on a 2023 national study, our state has the highest estimated prevalence of Alzheimer's in the nation,[2] yet **we do not have state-specific data on dementia prevalence**. As a result, we cannot properly plan programs and policies, allocate resources, or support people living with dementia and their caregivers, many of whom are family members providing unpaid care.

This is a gap that needs to be addressed, and was also identified in Maryland's *State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias* (the State Plan).[3] Specifically, 1 of the 5 goals in the State Plan is to "enhance data capabilities related to dementia and dementia impact and effects of interventions." The State Plan notes that effective methods for capturing and using population-based data are needed to improve care and support for Marylanders living with dementia and to adequately plan for the growth in both people at risk and who develop dementia in the future. **HB 1004 aligns directly with Goal 5 of the *State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*.**

There are several ways that data will improve care and support for Marylanders living with dementia and drive risk reduction approaches to lowering prevalence. Examples include:

- **Planning and Resource Allocation:** Data will help organizations and stakeholders like policymakers and healthcare providers understand the number of people impacted by dementia. This will allow the allocation of resources more effectively, such as funding for memory care units, caregiver support, and medical support.

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[1] 2024 Alzheimer's Facts and Figures
https://www.alz.org/getmedia/76e51bb6-c003-4d84-8019-e0779d8c4e8d/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf
[2] Dhana K, Beck T, Desai P, Wilson RS, Evans DA, Rajan KB. 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 Dement*. 2023; 19: 4388–4395. https://doi.org/10.1002/alz.13081
[3] Maryland State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, 2022-2026
https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/Pages/State-ADRD-Plan.aspx#:~:text=The%20updated%20State%20Plan%20is,health%20systems%2C%20and%20the%20community.&text=Goal%205%3A%20Enhance%20data%20capabilities,impact%20and%20effects%20of%20interventions.

- **Public Health:** Accurate data informs public health programs, early diagnosis campaigns, and more to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers.
- **Policy:** Data informs efforts to advocate for policy changes, funding, and improved care standards at both the state and federal levels.
- **Community Impact & Economic Costs:** Dementia affects not only those with a diagnosis, but also families, workplaces, and the economy. Understanding prevalence helps estimate the financial burden on the healthcare system and the workforce.
- **Research & Clinical Trials:** Localized data helps researchers track trends, identify risk factors, and develop targeted prevention and treatment strategies to Maryland's population.

This data will help Maryland advance towards a future where we are lowering our prevalence and effectively reaching those in need. While we work towards that future, **HB 1004 also addresses a new era for Alzheimer's disease and other dementia – treatment.** FDA-approved treatments for Alzheimer's disease, which became available in the past few years, can slow disease progression in early stages, not just ease symptoms.[4] Early intervention can provide time to plan for the future, adopt lifestyle changes, participate in clinical trials, and live more fully with a higher quality of life for as long as possible.

However, **many healthcare providers and Marylanders lack awareness of available treatment options.** This can be devastating, as the treatments available today are only effective in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Therefore, **it is critical to educate Marylanders**, including targeted outreach to healthcare providers, to ensure Marylanders are informed of their options as soon as possible so that they are not missing out on treatments.

With over $1 billion in annual Medicaid spending, addressing dementia requires a comprehensive approach. HB 1004 has negligible costs, particularly as treatment information can be incorporated into public awareness efforts in relevant programs in partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging, the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council, and the Alzheimer's Association. **Any costs related to data would be minimal and should be in line with other existing programs.** Similar reporting requirements for Parkinson's disease were adopted in SB 584 of 2023 and estimated start-up and operating expenses for data reporting were approximately $25,000[5] - less than 0.002% of the cost of Alzheimer's care to Maryland Medicaid.

The Alzheimer's Association strongly supports HB 1004 and urges a favorable report. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

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[4] https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/treatments/navigating-treatment-options

[5] Chapter 383 of the Acts of 2023, Public Health - Parkinson's Disease - Advisory Committee and Website https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0584/?ys=2023rs