



**LAILA'S GIFT**  
*Celebrating One Gift at a Time*

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**Senate Finance Committee**

**Senate Bill 555 — Dementia Care and Brain Health Initiatives**

**Position:** Support

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Laila's Gift, we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 555, legislation that advances Maryland's commitment to improving dementia care, strengthening early detection and intervention, and supporting families and caregivers affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Laila's Gift works closely with families navigating complex medical and caregiving needs. Many families are part of the sandwich generation and caregiving up and down the lifespan. Some of these families are raising children with special needs, and older adults with intellectual or cognitive disabilities. Early detection, timely diagnosis, and access to informed care planning can significantly improve quality of life, reduce crises, and help families make informed decisions about care and support services. Senate Bill 555 takes important steps to strengthen Maryland's capacity to address these needs.

A key component of the bill is the development of a Clinical Toolkit for Dementia Care, which will provide healthcare providers with practical, evidence-based resources to support early identification, diagnosis, and care planning. Ensuring that providers across disciplines have access to consistent, updated guidance is essential for improving care quality and reducing delays in diagnosis. The bill's requirement that the toolkit be updated annually and promoted across professional boards and associations helps ensure that providers remain equipped with current best practices.



The bill also establishes a Dementia Services and Brain Health Program within the Maryland Department of Health, which represents an important investment in statewide infrastructure. Coordinated leadership at the state level is critical to advancing risk reduction strategies, public awareness, and prevention efforts while improving access to services for individuals already living with dementia. A centralized program can help align initiatives across agencies, reduce fragmentation, and strengthen Maryland's long-term response to cognitive health needs.

In addition, Senate Bill 555 strengthens Maryland's strategic planning capacity by expanding the role of the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Council to include assessment of health care provider readiness and advising the State on strategies to strengthen dementia-capable care systems. This expanded role will help ensure that Maryland's policies are informed by real-world needs and emerging best practices while supporting workforce development and system preparedness.

From a caregiver perspective, these investments are critically important. Families caring for individuals with dementia often face significant emotional, financial, and logistical challenges. Access to knowledgeable providers, coordinated care systems, and evidence-based guidance can reduce caregiver stress, improve patient outcomes, and help families maintain stability for longer periods. Strengthening dementia care infrastructure ultimately benefits not only individuals living with dementia but also caregivers, healthcare systems, and communities statewide.

Importantly, efforts to promote brain health and risk reduction also represent an investment in future generations. By supporting prevention and early intervention, Maryland can help reduce long-term healthcare costs, delay disease progression, and improve overall population health outcomes.

For these reasons, Laila's Gift respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 555.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,



Shari Bailey  
Founder, CEO, Caregiver  
Laila's Gift