

Marylanders for Patient Rights

MARYLANDERS FOR PATIENT RIGHTS REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT ON SB555 Dementia Services and Brain Health Program and Clinical Toolkit

Marylanders for Patient Rights is a leading advocacy coalition for patients in our state, and we strongly support SB555. Having spent three years as a caregiver for an elderly family friend who had Alzheimer's, I know from experience about the importance of this bill.

I'd like to share my personal story with you as to why this bill is so important to those caring for Alzheimer's patients. I was a caregiver for my dear friend, Pat, who grew up in England during World War II, surviving the Nazi Blitz under near starvation conditions. After the war, she married an Air Force colonel and immigrated to the USA.

As Alzheimer's started to impact her cognitive functions, Pat's family doctor seemed unaware of all the signs that were painfully apparent to her friends and neighbors. Her doctor would send her for tests in places many miles from her home, not realizing that she posed a serious danger to herself and others while driving. Pat was good at "covering," and her doctor seemed unaware that she could no longer even read or write, never mind drive safely.

I can't emphasize enough just how important it is for providers to have the information described in SB555. Had the clinical "toolkit" described in this bill been available, Pat's doctor would have been able to provide early detection, diagnosis, and access to treatment and services.

It is estimated that Maryland has the highest prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in the country. Please provide a favorable report on SB555 and help Maryland healthcare providers access the latest information needed for diagnosis and treatment of those suffering from Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.

Thank you,

A C Palmisano

Anna C. Palmisano, Ph.D, Director
Marylanders for Patient Rights
palmscience@verizon.net
301-529-0946