



Bill: HB 1117 - Elopement Response Devices - Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage and Provision Under State Programs

Committee: House Health Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: March 13, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and their 247,000 caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association supports *HB 1117 - Elopement Response Devices - Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage and Provision Under State Programs*. This bill will ensure access to approved elopement response devices through both Maryland Medicaid and private insurance plans.

Wandering is one of the most dangerous and common dementia-related behaviors. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander at least once, and many do so repeatedly, often becoming lost or disoriented even in familiar settings.¹ Because individuals with dementia can lose the ability to recognize familiar places and faces, wandering can occur at any stage of the disease, and its unpredictability creates fear and stress for caregivers and families. HB 1117 takes an essential step toward addressing this risk by ensuring that devices designed for the prevention of or response to elopement are covered under Maryland Medicaid and private insurance plans.

Common signs that an individual may be at risk for wandering include returning home later than usual, forgetting familiar routes, restlessness, disorientation in new or crowded environments, and more. When these behaviors appear, elopement-response devices become safety interventions that complement structured routines and environmental modifications. HB 1117 ensures these devices are recognized as medically necessary, removing cost barriers that currently prevent many families from accessing them.

By requiring coverage across Medicaid and private insurance, HB 1117 aligns policy with evidence-based safety practices and addresses a widespread, predictable need. With 60% of individuals with dementia at risk for wandering, ensuring access to approved technologies will save lives, reduce emergency responses, and ease the immense burden on caregivers. For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association respectfully requests a favorable report. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering>