



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 17, 2022**

**House Bill 731**

**Department of Aging – Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigation Programs**

**House Health & Government Operations Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the mutual public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. We offer this testimony in support of House Bill 731.

House Bill 731 would establish the position of Dementia Care Coordinator in the Department of Aging to oversee dementia care navigation programs; would require each area agency to establish a dementia care navigation program and would require the Department to publish a certain report on its website.

Pope Francis has repeatedly called us to remember that the elderly especially those elderly with health issues are “a precious treasure” that we are called to care for and love.

In 2020 there were over 55 million people worldwide living with dementia and this number will almost double every 20 years, reaching 78 million in 2030 and 139 million in 2050. Research shows that most people currently living with dementia have not received a formal diagnosis and there are significant disparities in treatment and diagnosis for low-income people of color. Research also shows that earlier diagnosis and intervention are important mechanisms to close the disparity gap.<sup>1</sup>

HB 731 is a positive step forward in caring for our elderly and vulnerable communities. The bill, via the navigation programs that will be established, will provide cognitive screening and programs for those experiencing dementia along with much needed support for caregivers of those with dementia.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 833.

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<sup>1</sup> [Dementia statistics | Alzheimer's Disease International \(ADI\) \(alzint.org\)](https://alzint.org)

