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SB 27

March 24, 2022

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 27 – Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia - Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022)

POSITION: Support

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 27.

SB 27 takes an important step in addressing the growing burden of Alzheimer's and other dementias on Maryland's older adults by strengthening and renaming the Virginia I Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council to the Virginia I Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council, clarifying its responsibilities for updating the State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders, and creating a Director of Dementia Services and Brain Health within the Maryland Department of Aging to support the Council's work and implementation of the State Plan.

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 110,000 Marylanders 65 and over had Alzheimer's Disease in 2020 and that this number will grow to 130,000 by 2025. Data indicates 1 in 12 Maryland residents 45 years and older are experiencing Subjective Cognitive Decline (SCD), which is defined as self-reported memory problems that have been getting worse over the past year. Updating the State Plan and developing research-based strategies supporting individuals with Alzheimer's disease improve the quality of support services available for these individuals and their caregivers.

The City of Baltimore is particularly concerned with the disproportionate burden of dementia in minority communities. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that "older African Americans are about two times more likely than older whites to have Alzheimer's or other dementias," and that "older Hispanics are about one and one-half times more likely than older whites to have Alzheimer's or other dementias." Because two-thirds of Baltimore's older adults are African-American, we recognize that dementia disproportionately affects the people our City Health Department serves.

SB 27 aligns with the work Baltimore City is currently doing to ensure that individuals with dementia receive high-quality care, as the City Health Department works to train staff on how to recognize signs of dementia and support patients and caregivers.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 27.

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