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SB 27 Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia - Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022)
FAVORABLE
House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 24, 2022

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP is the largest membership-based organizations for individuals 50 and over in the United States and has over 870,000 members in Maryland. AARP Maryland supports **S8 27 Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia-Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022)**.

SB 27 establishes a Director of Dementia Services and Brain Health position in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to coordinate and facilitate communication relating to dementia services in the State. The bill renames the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council as the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council. Beginning in fiscal 2023, the Governor must include an appropriation in the annual budget to fund the director position and the council. By September 1, 2022, and each September 1 every five years thereafter, the council must issue and publish an update to the State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias. By September 1, 2023, and each September 1 every five years thereafter, the director must report to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly on the activities and recommendations of the director. The bill also removes the council's termination date.

At least one in five older Americans has a mental health condition. Among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, the most common are depression, anxiety, dementia, and other neurocognitive impairments. By 2030, the number of older people with such disorders is expected to double.

Mental disorders seldom occur in isolation and can often lead to serious physical health issues. However, they are frequently undiagnosed or misdiagnosed in older patients. Older adults are more likely than younger adults to receive inappropriate or inadequate services related to brain health.

The Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council beginning in fiscal 2023 is a collaborative of state agencies, human services professionals, health care professionals and stakeholders from around the state working in areas of dementia services and brain health related to the human cognition. The council's focus is to examine the needs of individuals with

Alzheimer's and related Dementias, their caregivers and to Identify methods through which the State can most effectively and efficiently assist in meeting those need. And finally, to develop and promote strategies to encourage brain health and reduce cognitive decline.

For these reason, AARP Maryland respectfully request a favorable report for SB 27. If there are questions or follow up needed, please contact me at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.