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**TO:** Finance Committee  
**FROM:** LeadingAge Maryland  
**SUBJECT:** House Bill 731, Department of Aging - Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigators  
**DATE:** February 17, 2022  
**POSITION: Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 731, Department of Aging - Dementia Care Coordinator and Dementia Care Navigators.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 135 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

This bill establishes the position of Dementia Care Coordinator in the Department of Aging to manage the work of dementia care navigators and requires each area agency to employ a dementia care navigator. The bill authorizes dementia care navigators to provide support services for caregivers, increase community awareness, offer technical assistance, and establish relationships with health care providers. The Governor must include \$1,600,000 in the annual budget bill to employ the Dementia Care Coordinator and dementia care navigators.

Family caregivers serve a critical role, and often need information about community resources, specialists, mental health supports, and services like home care, adult day care, assisted living, and nursing homes. While there are some existing options for resources, like privately paid senior care navigators, the Alzheimer's Association, or primary care offices, there are not central access points where the individual on the other end of the phone has specific knowledge about the unique needs of those living with dementia and their families. This legislation could prove essential in providing a single point of contact for caregivers to help them better navigate the complex and often difficult to find resources and supports.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 731.

For additional information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, 410.446.1992