

Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters
SB 27 Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia - Council and Coordination of Services (Dementia Services Act of 2022) before the House Health and Government Operations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk,

The Alzheimer's Association writes in strong support of SB 27, and is grateful to Senator Augustine for his leadership on this legislation, and for his service on the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council. He represents a county that is an extraordinary, dementia-friendly community. This includes the work of the Prince George's County Department of Family Services—which, under the leadership of former County Executive Baker and current County Executive Alsobrooks—has been awarded a federal Dementia Capable Grant from the Administration for Community Living to provide support for caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

This legislation, at its core, creates a Director-level position at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) focused on dementia and brain health across state agencies; if enacted and implemented, Maryland will join 15 other states who have a staff member focused on dementia (a disease our state spends over \$1.2 billion on in Medicaid costs alone). It also recognizes the importance of the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council, which has recently approved its next state plan on Alzheimer's Disease and other dementia.

As the House considers this legislation, we would ask for a favorable with an amendments report, so that SB 27 is amended to match HB 166 (the companion bill that emerged out of the House). Those changes, to make SB 27 identical to HB 166, include:

- Codifying the salary of this new position at MDH [HB 166, page 7, lines 6 through 11], so that this becomes a mandated appropriation;
- Specifying the role of the position, which adds, "...Including through public awareness, prevention, and early detection and diagnosis." [HB 166, page 6, lines 4-5] – to add clarity to the work ahead for this important role at the Health Department.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this important legislation, which will help us continue to build an infrastructure across Maryland to end Alzheimer's.