



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of SB 725: Maryland Department of Health-Public Health Outreach Programs-
Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease, and Other Types of Dementia

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

I commend Senator Lam for introducing Senate Bill 725, which would require the Maryland Department of Health to include information on cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and other types of dementia in public health outreach programs.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and in 2019, there are roughly 110,000 Marylanders aged 65 and older living with Alzheimer's. Public health outreach and education is critical to health care providers, adults, and caregivers that focuses on understanding early warning signs and the importance of annual wellness visits for older residents. I am particularly encouraged that SB 725 seeks to increase understanding on how to reduce cognitive decline risks.

Between 2000 and 2017, Howard County's population over 65 and has doubled. By 2040, we anticipate that this number will increase by 22%. As our population increases, there is a possibility that cases of Alzheimer's will grow as well. Howard County actively partners with the Alzheimer's Association to serve and support families with individuals living with dementia; including monthly support groups for caregivers and social day programs hosted at our 50+ centers across the county. Additionally, Howard County is a licensed provider of Virtual Dementia Tours and we recently trained 32 Howard County police officers during a crisis intervention training. Each of these programs provide respite and support for caregivers, provides socialization and therapeutic opportunities for those living with dementia and trains our first responders how to interact with them.

Howard County recently applied to the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities initiative to support the health and quality of life for all ages. The Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Aging are key partners to jurisdictions across the State investing in our older adult population and caregivers. Senate Bill 725 is crucial to aiding the fight against Alzheimer's and is a significant step to provide coordinated, comprehensive outreach that focuses on prevention, detection, awareness and education.

I welcome your partnership and urge a favorable report on SB 725.

All the best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive