

**Alzheimer's Association, West Virginia Chapter**

**Public Policy Priorities – 2014**

**More than 48,000 West Virginians have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and this number is projected to grow 25 percent by 2025. The Alzheimer's Association, West Virginia Chapter is the only voluntary health organization in West Virginia solely dedicated to providing education and support services to individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias, their families and caregivers. West Virginia policymakers must act now to address the burden of Alzheimer's and dementia.**

**1. Implement the recommendations of the Make a Plan (MAP) for Alzheimer's disease. More than 50 state government, private, nonprofit, and community stakeholders have collaborated to develop a comprehensive plan of policy recommendations to enable West Virginia to become the nation's first Alzheimer-capable state. Recommendations include:**

- Expanding access to adult day health services in West Virginia and ensuring they are a reimbursable service.
- Growing partnerships between the Legislature, Department of Military Affairs, Bureau of Senior Services, County Sheriff's departments, and local police departments to improve safety for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.
- Devising incentives to recruit more physicians and mid-level providers into practicing geriatrics.

**2. Maintain \$45,000 in state funding for the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 Helpline.**

- The 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering education and support for people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers and is operated by trained staff members who understand the disease, its progression, and how it affects the physical and emotional health of people with the disease, as well as their families and caregivers.

**3. Protect and expand state respite funding for the Family Alzheimer's In-Home Respite (FAIR) program.**

- This critical, state-funded program offered in every county of West Virginia provides respite to family caregivers and delivers individualized attention and activities for the person with Alzheimer's.
- FAIR services help people with Alzheimer's remain at home longer and can postpone the need for other costlier state services such as Medicaid.
- Increased funding would allow West Virginia to serve more families and alleviate waiting lists that frequently exist.

**4. Enact legislation to help prevent, detect, report and address financial exploitation, which preserves funding for Adult Protective Services and increases civil and criminal penalties.**

- Individuals with Alzheimer's disease are at a significantly greater risk of elder abuse, which, like many other forms of domestic abuse, is an often hidden phenomenon. To help safeguard individuals with cognitive impairment, the Alzheimer's Association supports state laws that strengthen protections against fraud, deception and unfair practices.

**For more information on these issues, contact:**

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