

## **LD 1314: Resolve, To Improve Access to Neurobehavioral Services**

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

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Thank you, Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and sitting members of the committee for holding today's public hearing. We applaud your leadership on issues important to Mainers with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementias, and their caregivers. We appreciate the opportunity to voice our support for LD 1314.

Alzheimer's and dementia is complex. The way the disease presents itself varies from person to person based on the individual's personality, environment, and how the disease affects that individual's brain. Due to the variation in all of these areas, some individuals present with particularly complex behavioral and/or emotional needs. Often people with this level of complexity end up abandoned in hospitals or in the ineffective and costly cycle of transitions from home, to nursing centers, to hospitals and back. Complex clients are difficult to place in facilities staffed and trained to properly meet their needs. These individuals would benefit immensely from a neuro-behavioral center with trained and adequate staff to meet their needs, in turn reducing the bottleneck we see at the hospitals. In many cases, a neuro-behavioral center would identify methods for reducing distress and developing effective care plans allowing the person living with the disease to transition home or to a standard residential setting. A neuro-behavioral center would reduce the hesitancy for nursing centers to admit complex individuals by offering alternate avenues to manage a person safely and appropriately.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, neurodegenerative and fatal disease for which there is currently no treatment or cure. Alzheimer's was identified by the New England Journal of Medicine as the most expensive disease in the United States, costing the nation \$257 billion in 2017. MaineCare costs are roughly 19 times higher for seniors living with Alzheimer's and dementia than costs for other seniors. This year Alzheimer's will cost MaineCare \$187 million dollars. Improving the transitions between care providers helps bring down these costs. New research from Tufts Medical Center demonstrates that improved care planning would prevent one out of every seven hospitalizations of people with Alzheimer's, saving the nation an estimated \$2.6 billion dollars annually in Medicare costs alone. Implementing state policy solutions like LD 1314 now is crucial in order to address this growing public health crisis.

**State Plan Implementation is the Driving Force Behind Meeting These Needs.** In 2011 Governor LePage signed the *State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Maine* into law. The state plan clearly shows that we must work together to implement the recommendations in this plan, and we can only do this with support from the legislature. There are several recommendations in the State Plan that correspond with LD 1314 including the *Comprehensive Roadmap for Diagnosis and Treatment in Maine* found in Part IV (pg. 25-38), Part V, Strategy 19 and strategy 20 (pg. 45), Part VI, Strategy 8 (pg. 50), and Part VII, Strategy 12 (pg. 57)

The Alzheimer's Association, Maine Chapter strongly urges members of the committee to help pass LD 1314. Smooth transitions between care settings and coordination among health and long-term care service providers are essential to ensure high quality, cost efficient care, particularly given the complexities of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Thank you for holding today's hearing and for your continued

leadership on issues that are so important to individuals and families facing Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

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**REFERENCE:**

*Alzheimer's Association's 2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*  
[http://www.alz.org/documents\\_custom/2017-facts-and-figures.pdf](http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/2017-facts-and-figures.pdf)

*Potentially Avoidable Hospitalizations among Medicare Beneficiaries with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders* (Tufts Medical Center)  
[http://www.alzheimersanddementia.com/article/S1552-5260\(12\)02520-4/abstract](http://www.alzheimersanddementia.com/article/S1552-5260(12)02520-4/abstract)

*State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia in Maine*  
<http://act.alz.org/site/DocServer/ALZStatePlanwithAppendix.pdf?docID=13302>

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