



TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT

LD 1677: An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevention and
Support Program

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

May 2, 2025

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Nicole Marchesi. I am the Public Policy Advocate for the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman Program provides statewide advocacy services for older and disabled adult residents of nursing homes, residential care and assisted living and for recipients of home care services and participants in adult day services.

We are pleased to submit testimony in support of LD 1677, An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias and Prevention and Support Program.

This bill establishes the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevention and Support Program, which the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention must administer in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Aging and Disability Services. The program's objectives include public education, supporting efforts for early detection and diagnosis, reducing cognitive decline and other negative outcomes and supporting care planning and management. This bill also creates the Healthy Brain Initiative Council as an Advisory Board of various stakeholders. The council will be tasked with studying and developing findings and recommendations on a series of topics.

LD 1677 is an important next step to codifying the Maine Alzheimer's Prevention Program, the

Healthy Brain Initiative stakeholder group and requires a State Plan on Alzheimer's to be updated every five years. This bill will be a commitment to align Maine with National standards to better address dementia. The Ombudsman Program serves as a member of the Healthy Brain Initiative Stakeholder group that was convened by the Maine CDC. This group is a critical component to provide public awareness, access to care, caregiver support, workforce training and development, legal issues and research and data. This is an essential step in addressing an increasing public health crisis.

As an advocacy organization we often help individuals living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers navigate the complexities to access care and quality of care in settings such as in their home, nursing homes, residential care homes and assisted housing. Our staff hear stories from family caregivers daily, many who are trying to find resources for their loved ones with dementia so they can remain in their home as long as possible. Family caregivers often come up against numerous barriers in accessing the support that are needed. Barriers such as staffing shortages, caps on respite programs, and limited adult day services programs put a massive strain on families. It is important to have sustainable measures in place to help address Alzheimer's disease so individuals living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers have the support and resources they need to navigate the complexities the disease brings into their daily lives.

We urge you to support LD 1677, a critical step forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

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