

## LD 2125 An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Advisory Council Within the Department of Health and Human Services and to Require a State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias

Testimony in Support January 24, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

This bill represents a primary recommendation of the Maine CDC Report on addressing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, the report was published in 2023 and contains recommendations for a state plan through 2027.

The Maine's Alzheimer's disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) State Plan recognizes the value of older adults with dementia and the need for policies aimed at enhancing prevention through early detection and diagnosis, provider to patient communication and care planning, treatment, and appropriate supports for people with dementia and their care partners and family members. Dr. Clifford Singer, MD, at Northern Light Acadia Hospital, participated in the development of this plan. Dr. Singer is a geriatric psychiatrist and serves as Director of the Mood and Memory Clinic at Acadia Hospital, one of our state's primary resources for clinical care, education and research in dementia. The long-wait times to get into this clinic underscore the growing need for services like this and how important it is to meet the goals set out by the State Plan to improve access.

It is indeed clear to us at Northern Light Health that the demand for Alzheimer's care and supportive services exceeds statewide capacity. The Maine Alzheimer's Association reports that the number of people aged 65 and older with Alzheimer's will increase from 29,000 in 2020 to 35,000 in 2025. This represents a 20.7% increase in just 5 years. Effectively meeting the needs of the Alzheimer's patients and their families requires capacity building in our health care systems and clinics, increasing the number of geriatricians and medical professionals with expertise in Alzheimer's, training and Northern Light Health Government Relations 43 Whiting Hill Road Brewer, Maine 04412

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Northern Light Health Acadia Hospital A.R. Gould Hospital Blue Hill Hospital C.A. Dean Hospital Eastern Maine Medical Center Home Care & Hospice Inland Hospital Maine Coast Hospital Mayo Hospital Marcy Hospital Northern Light Health Foundation Northern Light Pharmacy Sebasticook Valley Hospital education in every Maine community, research and the need for strategic coordination of all of the short term and long term recommendations outlined in the report. I have attached the recommendations from the report to my testimony.

The bill before you today is the framework to meet a key short term recommendation – *Establish a permanent Alzheimer's and Dementia Council to advise state agencies, lead and oversee state plan implementation.* 

We ask that you support this legislation to advance this critically important work.

Thank you.

### Short Term Recommendations



**Guiding Principles** 

- Human rights of people with dementia
- Empowerment and engagement of people with dementia and their care partners
- Evidence-based practice for dementia risk reduction and care
- Multisectoral collaboration on the public health response to dementia
- Universal health and social care coverage for dementia
- Equity
- Appropriate attention to dementia prevention, cure and care
- Quality Assurance and Accountability

# Recommendations

#### SHORT TERM (2022-2025)

- 1. Expand access to interdisciplinary dementia diagnostic clinics
- 2. Integrate cognitive impairment and care partner support into hospital operational plans for acute care of patients with ADRD
- 3. Provide training, education and counseling services to ADRD care partners
- 4. Train public safety professionals in engagement approaches for ADRD individuals
- 5. Train court-related personnel on engaging, supporting, and seeking justice for victims living with ADRD
- 6. Develop culturally competent, ADRD training for health orofessionals
- 7. Develop and train regional & municipal officials in ADRD, service needs, and supports
- 8. Create a widespread, culturally sensitive public awareness campaign for ADRD
- 9. Create connections with financial institutions and legal entities to support autonomy of those with ADRD
- 10. Create non-discrimination resources for workforce focusing on ADRD
- 11. Facilitate and promote collaboration among research organizations, stakeholders, and investigators
- 12. Educate legislators about the need for policies that support funding for ADRD services and supports
- 13. Incorporate cognitive health messaging into existing state health priorities
- 14. Establish a full-time Dementia Coordinator within Maine CDC
- 15. Establish a permanent Alzheimer's and Dementia Council to advise state agencies, lead and oversee state plan implementation



- Educate and empower
- Advance policies and mobilize partnerships
- Increase public awareness
- Assure a competent workforce
- Develop and foster safe, dementia
- friendly communities

- Enhance methodologies to actively monitor and report cases of ADRD
- Enhance and expand accessibility of ADRD services and resources

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## Long Term Recommendations



- Human rights of people with dementia
- Empowerment and engagement of people with dementia and their care partners
- Evidence-based practice for dementia risk reduction and care
- Multisectoral collaboration on the public health response to dementia
- Universal health and social care coverage for dementia
- Equity
- Appropriate attention to dementia prevention, cure and care
- Quality Assurance and Accountability

#### LONG TERM (2025-2027)

- 1. Develop care navigator program, to include a "no wrong door" referral system
- 2. Expand funding streams for ADRD services
- 3. Integrate recreational programming into community-based programs
- Promote regional public safety groups to discuss safety needs and support for individuals with ADRD and care partners
- 5. Expand domestic violence and sexual assault services for individuals with ADRD
- 6. Increase outreach and collaboration of Maine's ADRD statewide network to primary and secondary venues
- 7. Create methodologies for actively monitoring and case reporting of ADRD

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- Develop and foster safe, dementia friendly communities
- Enhance methodologies to actively monitor and report cases of ADRD
- Enhance and expand accessibility of ADRD services and resources