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Testimony of Representative Dan Shagoury introducing
**LD 1677, An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related
Dementias Prevention and Support Program**
Before the Health and Human Services Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and fellow members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Representative Dan Shagoury, and I represent House District 55 - the communities of Hallowell, Manchester and West Gardiner. I am pleased to present **LD 1677, An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevention and Support Program**.

This bill will codify current efforts to address Alzheimer's in Maine and ensure this work continues in the future. A very similar version of this bill was passed unanimously by this Committee and the full Legislature last year but was not signed by the Governor at the end of the session, along with many other bills. We are here again to get this over the finish line.

LD 1677 codifies into state law current efforts to implement a strategic approach to addressing the Alzheimer's public health crisis. There are three elements:

- 1) The Maine Alzheimer's Prevention Program at the Maine CDC;
- 2) The Healthy Brain Initiative Stakeholder Group; and
- 3) The State Plan on Alzheimer's and Related Dementias.

The Maine Alzheimer's Prevention Program would require the Maine CDC to engage in activities to support dementia risk reduction, early diagnosis and care planning and management for affected families. The Healthy Brain Initiative Stakeholder Group would be established to assist Maine CDC with these efforts and collaborate with Maine CDC to develop the State Plan on Alzheimer's and help implement it. The State Plan, required to be updated every five years, helps align government and non-governmental stakeholders on a common course of action and drives progress. As Maine recently completed its State Plan, it would not need to be updated until 2028. All of these elements work together to ensure that Maine continues efforts to address Alzheimer's now and in the future, when the prevalence and costs of the disease will continue to rise.

The bill has been drafted so that it would not be onerous, burdensome or costly for DHHS to implement. In fact, it is a cost-effective way to continue momentum on efforts to address Alzheimer's because it relies not only on the Maine CDC, but also on the significant number of Healthy Brain Initiative Stakeholders for implementation of the State Plan on Alzheimer's.

In the past, the Department of Health and Human Services has said that the bill is not needed. But the Department has not always focused on addressing Alzheimer's. Our former colleague, Representative Margaret Craven, secured a law to require the first State Plan on Alzheimer's, which was released in 2011. Nothing really happened with that state plan because there was no requirement to continue on with implementation.

This bill rectifies that. Maine CDC has done a good job of bringing together an active and engaged stakeholder group that is committed to promoting dementia risk reduction and improving care and support to affected families. We need to make sure that Maine CDC continues to be that convening authority and that we don't lose sight of this important issue no matter what may happen in the future.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you on this bill.