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Colin Ford, Public Policy Director
House Subcommittee on MDHHS Appropriations
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On behalf of the volunteers and advocates of the Michigan Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, I am requesting that the Committee prioritize funding within state government to better address the range of issues stemming from Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia. Specifically, we are asking that the legislature continue funding for the dementia unit contained in Section 122 of the FY 2021-2022 budget, and that steps be taken to establish dementia within the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Section.

Dementia is predominantly diagnosed in persons over the age of 65, so it is not surprising that our demographic profile in Michigan projects that the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is anticipated to increase by 15% within the current five-year window. Michigan currently funds many of the downstream costs associated with dementia in the form of Medicaid expenditures related to hospital costs, long term services and supports, and nursing home services. Additionally, there are more than 450,000 caregivers providing unpaid care to persons living with Alzheimer's disease. While the costs associated with caregiving are not directly borne by the state, diminished health status and lost productivity does result in indirect costs to the budget and the economy more broadly.

Dementia has historically been viewed as part of the aging process. However, important scientific research has advanced our understanding of the causes and effects of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Dementia is a chronic disease that is receptive to many of the public health interventions and resources that are available for other conditions. The Chronic Disease and Injury Control Section possesses the expertise and experience with other diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular health, diabetes, and other conditions to leverage state, federal, and private sector resources to maximize the efficacy of our efforts to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

Section 122 in the FY 2021-2022 budget allocated \$400,000 in one-time funding for a "dementia unit," we believe that this objective is best accomplished by incorporating dementia into the Chronic Disease and Injury Control section. Furthermore, the prevalence and severity of Alzheimer's disease warrants a more permanent investment by incorporating \$400,000 into the Chronic Disease and Injury Control section of the budget.

Thank you for your consideration, we look forward to discussing this matter further throughout the deliberations of the budget. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at cjford@alz.org.