



Date: February 25, 2025

To: Representative Susan Donovan, Chair
Members, House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Carol Costa,
Senior Agenda Coalition of RI Executive Director

RE: H5352, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Rhode Island Program to Address Alzheimer's Disease,

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI (SACRI) is pleased to support H5352, sponsored by Representatives Casimiro, Shekarchi, Noret, Spears, Carson, Ackerman and Shanley

According to the Alzheimer's Association, 24,000 Rhode Island residents, many of whom are older adults, have Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia (ADRD). And 36,000 caregivers dedicate 51 million hours of unpaid care to support these individuals. As the population grows older, the number of persons with ADRD is projected to increase.

In response to the statistics on the incidence of ADRD and the significant impact of ADRD on the state's health care system and families, in 2019 the legislature passed a law creating an Alzheimer's Advisory Council and required the R.I. Health Department to annually update the Alzheimer's State Plan. The Advisory Council was also charged with developing a standardized assessment protocol, and for healthcare facilities to complete and implement an operational plan for the recognition and management of patients with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

In February, 2024, Lt. Governor Matos, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and state leaders released the [Rhode Island Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders \(ADRD\) 2024-2029 State Plan](#) developed by the Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders and statewide partners. The Plan, an update of the prior 5-year ADRD State Plan, detailed 34 recommendations on how to improve the quality of life and accessibility of care for Rhode Islanders with dementia by the end of this decade. A priority recommendation in the Plan called for allocating a director-level position in the RI Health Department (RIDOH) to coordinate implementation of the State Plan.

This recommendation was achieved utilizing a federal BOLD (Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure) grant which has supported a grant-funded RIDOH full-time employee to convene key partners, with the goal of achieving Rhode Island's ADRD State Plan recommendations. This bill would codify into law the position of Dementia Services Coordinator. As continued federal funding to support this position is uncertain

creating the position in the state system is important for continuing this important work. I urge you to recommend this bill to the full House. Thank you for your consideration.