



February 22, 2025

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House

Re: **Testimony SUPPORTING House Bill 5352,**

Dear Chair Donovan and Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of **House Bill 5352**, to create the position of dementia services coordinator within the Department of Health.

With the number of people living with dementia in Rhode Island ever increasing, it is crucial that our Department of Health have a coordinated approach to addressing the myriad challenges of living with dementia and caring for those living with dementia. The current ADRD Program has been highly effective and has accomplished a great deal, but the program is funded by a now-precarious federal grant, the requirements of which have demanded a large share of the coordinator's time and energy. The program has not had sufficient resources to:

- Fully oversee the implementation of the Rhode Island Alzheimer's disease and related disorder state plan;
- Assess and analyze dementia-related data collected by the state;
- Evaluate state-funded dementia services;
- Identify and support the provision of dementia-specific training programs;
- Coordinate with agencies, providers, and organizations within the state in order to meet the needs of those affected by dementia and prevent the duplication of services and initiatives;
- Recommend strategies to improve coordination of dementia-related services and resources provided by public and private entities;

We believe that a Dementia Services Coordinator will help ensure that dementia care training in Rhode Island is accessible, effective, and evidence-based; that licensed professional dementia care is better aligned with evidence-based best practices, and that informal and family caregivers are better supported so that licensed professional care is necessary less often. H5352 will make this possible, and we strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,
ABC-RI