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The Honorable Melissa A. Murray, Chair —SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**RE: 26-S 2874**

Dear Chair Murray and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Please support 26-S 2874 put forth by Senators DiPalma, Valverde, Ujifusa, and Lauria. This legislation would create a dedicated Dementia Services Coordinator within the Department of Health. We need this kind of focused support to make headway against dementias.

Dementia-related disorders, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, remain among the most devastating maladies older adults suffer. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that between 475 and 500 people die of these dementias each year in Rhode Island.

But there is a way forward. The [2024-2029 State Plan for Rhode Island Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders](#) summarizes the work of an outstanding stakeholder advisory council. Their plan accurately describes increasing rates of dementias and strategies needed to address widespread needs. The plan proposes strategic goals and specific objectives that need to be addressed (1) in communities, particularly for those living with dementia and their caregivers, (2) in the professional workforce that serves patients and their caregivers, (3) in the health system, which will need to increase and coordinate services, and (4) in a public health approach to ever-growing needs for dementia care.

I urge the Senate Health and Human Services Committee to recommend Senator DiPalma's legislation that would: (1) Direct the Department of Health to create a Dementia Services Coordinator, (2) Define duties that will significantly improve coordination of dementia-related services throughout Rhode Island, and (3) Improve data collection, agency accountability, and family support.

Senator DiPalma's legislation to create a Dementia Services Coordinator within the Department of Health is clearly the right next step for implementing this vital report. Please recommend the Health and Human Services Committee to advance 26-S 2874 for passage by the full Senate.

Sincerely,