

The Village Common of Rhode Island

Aging Better Together

March 11, 2026

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

SLegislation@rilegislature.gov

Re: Rhode Island Coordinator of Dementia Services (Bill - S2874)

We support legislation that would guide the creation of a Dementia Services Coordinator within the Department of Health.

The Village Common of Rhode Island is a statewide non-profit that deploys a wide array of volunteer supports to help older adults live safely and independently in their homes. We coordinate crucial services through locally organized and operated villages that serve older adults in Barrington, Bristol Warren, Burrillville, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Exeter, Glocester, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Middletown, Newport, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Richmond, Warwick and Westerly. We are currently helping local volunteers organize new villages in Bristol-Warren, Exeter, Cumberland, Jamestown, and Warwick. All told, The Village Common now has 800 members and 625 volunteers. Our approach saves money and lives. Our motto is: "Aging Better Together."

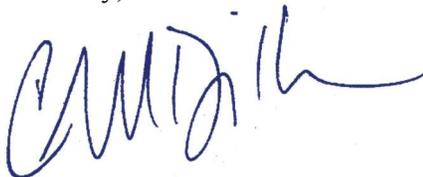
We in The Village Common strongly support legislation that would (1) Direct the Department of Health to create a Dementia Services Coordinator, (2) Define duties that will significantly improve coordination of dementia-related services throughout Rhode Island, (3) Improve data collection, agency accountability, and family support.

Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias have increased significantly in recent years. The 2024-2029 State Plan for Rhode Island Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders by Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos and Interim Director of Health Utpala Bandy summarizes the work over several years of an outstanding stakeholder Advisory Council. This 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.

This crucial report provides a roadmap that appears doable in Rhode Island, but its implementation will require professional knowledge, wise collaboration, and diligent work over many years.

On behalf of The Village Common, I urge the Finance Committee to recommend 25-S 0869 for passage by the full Senate.

Sincerely,



Caroline Dillon

Executive Director

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