



House Bill 397

Proponent Testimony

**Trey Addison, Director of Public Policy
Alzheimer's Association**

6/04/2024

Chairman Matthews, Vice-Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee.

My name is Trey Addison, Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association. In my role, I advocate on behalf of the estimated 220,000 individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia and their 450,000 family caregivers throughout all 88 counties in Ohio, I also lead the association's regional policy work in Michigan and West Virginia. I also represent the most comprehensive Alzheimer's and Dementia service organization in the United States. The Alzheimer's Association is the largest non-profit funder of research in the world, works with families to support caregiver needs, provides a 24/7 Helpline, and works with individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia in all 50 states. The Ohio Alzheimer's Association serves thousands of families and individuals annually by providing support programs in partnership with Area Agencies on Aging.

The responsibility of serving Ohio's most vulnerable population is not something we take lightly. In 2019, we fought for the introduction and the passage of Senate Bill 24, which established an Ohio Alzheimer's and Dementia State Task Force. In 2022, we were instrumental in the passage of House Bill 23, which was signed into law by Governor DeWine, which requires Ohio's First Responders to receive Dementia Training. Currently, we are here to advocate and support House Bill 397, a foundational piece of legislation essential to Alzheimer's and other Dementia support in Ohio.

As Ohio's aging population continues to grow, so will the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's and Dementia. The Alzheimer's Association expects the total number of people living with Alzheimer's to increase by over 25 percent over the next 7 to 10 years. This statistic is alarming in several ways. In Ohio, we will see our costs rise because Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in America. Second, Alzheimer's does not have a cure however, there are promising treatments in place, and more to come. This will not be enough, especially for people who are currently living with the disease and the loved ones and communities who care for them.

Ohio must act now to pass House Bill 397 which will provide the necessary public awareness, community collaboration, and State coordination between the Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Department of Health. This collaboration is critical to the success of the bottom line. The same can be said for public and private institutions teaming up to bring down costs, deliver solutions to educate the public, and prove Ohio to be the best place to age in the country.

House Bill 397 also addresses issues that Ohio needs to focus on such as early warning signs, and healthy brain initiatives, while also scaling early detection and timely diagnosis. Another key area of focus within the legislation is related to educating members of the healthcare community about the Medicare annual wellness visits for individuals aged 65 and older for cognitive health, which will include the billing code for treatment related to cognitive impairment.

We urge the House Public Health Committee members to vote and pass House Bill 397 out of the committee and support this much-needed legislation when it goes to the House floor for a vote. Thank you for your time, consideration, and the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Alzheimer's Association.

Thank you,

Trey M. Addison

Director of Public Policy

Ohio Alzheimer's Association

