



Alzheimer's Association Ohio
Senate Health Committee
Chair Stephen Huffman, Ranking Member Nickie Antonio
Testimony by: **Trey Addison- Director of Public Policy the Alzheimer's Association**

Good morning. And Thank you, Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the 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 diseases and other dementia and their 450,000 family caregivers in Ohio. 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, behind the United States, and Chinese government. We work with families to support caregiver needs, provide a 24/7 Helpline for families, and work with individuals who have Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. In Ohio, the Alzheimer's Association serves thousands of families and individuals annually and provides support programs to all 88 counties in Ohio in partnership with the Ohio Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging.

Our responsibility of serving Ohio's most vulnerable population is not something we take lightly. That is why we have been fighting to reshape how Ohio addresses Alzheimer's and other dementia.

In 2020 Governor DeWine signed into law HB23 which established the Alzheimer's and other Dementia State Task Force. That task force is slated to produce a report that will highlight how Ohio should move forward in our fight against Dementia, and how to better support caregivers, and the overall Alzheimer's and other Dementia System. In 2022 Governor DeWine signed into law Senate Bill 24, which established Dementia Training for Ohio's First Responders. In 2023, Governor DeWine established the Nursing Home Accountability Task Force, which is extremely important, because many of Ohioians who live in nursing home facilities long-term, have cognitive impairment issues. As you can see, Ohio is moving in the right direction, but there is a lot more work to do.

The sad thing is, the numbers of people receiving a diagnoses are projected to grow by more than 25% in Ohio over the next decade, and the better we get at diagnosing the better we need to be in caring for people that receive the diagnoses and working with in partnership with their families to help them navigate.

I once heard a family tell me, "Trey, when my mother in-law passed, it was like losing her twice, first to Alzheimer's and then 10 years later when she died." This is the reality of so many people, especially as Ohio's population continues to age, rural communities are being hit hard and resources in other areas across Ohio are stretched thin. For example, it is estimated that by 2025, 250,000 Ohioans 65 or older will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which is a 13% increase in 2 years. Based on our analysis, Ohio is struggling to serve the current 200,000 living with the diseases and not scratching the surface of the family caregivers that support them.

This is why we support Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Aging's budget on Aging issues. In particular, the increases in the Alzheimer's and other Dementia Respite Line item (490-414), and the Ohio Department of Aging's Healthy Aging Grant program.

Every one of these items in the budget move Ohio, citizens living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, and their families one step closer to the hope, and services they need. Ohio needs to be transformational in both attracting new business, retaining talent, and making sure Ohioians age with dignity. These programs do that, and will create scaled impact in both the short and long-term

The Alzheimer's Respite Line currently impacts thousands of families and those living with Alzheimer's and other dementia throughout Ohio. The Alzheimer's Association, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Aging and Area Agencies on Aging team up every year to serve all 88 counties. However, as the population ages, more people are diagnosed which starts to create gaps in service. For example, nearly 50% of Ohio counties have populations over the age of 60. That said, a large percentage of those individuals will likely experience cognitive decline, the current Alzheimer's Respite Program cannot withstand the continued influx of people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, and the families that support them. The line items that support the Alzheimer's respite have remained flat for a very long time. With that said, the Alzheimer's Association and our partners have tried to keep up with services even while the resources to do so have remained flat.

By increasing the respite line back to the original amount, we can anticipate greater impact in both the short and long term. We will be able to expand into rural areas, and double down on communities that are and will likely be hit the hardest. The Alzheimer's and other dementia line item is a true Public-Private-Partnership that has saved lives, and created impact for more than 23 years.

In our view, the respite line coupled with the Healthy Aging Grant provides stability and a more localized approach to caring for Ohio's most vulnerable population. The programs work in tandem, and over time become the aging backbone for Ohioians to age in place, with the resources and the dignity they deserve. We ask that you support HB33, and in particular the Alzheimer's

Respite line item 490-414, along with the Governor's Healthy Aging Grants that will secure Ohio as the best place to age in the United States.

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Alzheimer's Association