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**Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee**  
**Senator Steve Wilson and Senator Kenny Yuko**  
**March 26th, 2019**  
**Senate Bill 24**

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 24.

My name is Dr. Lori Stevic-Rust and I have been providing clinical evaluations and care for those with the diagnosis of dementia for over 30 years. I consult with hospitals and post-acute care communities to establish therapeutic environments and care plans for those with dementia. I train staff on best practices for holistic dementia care that integrates science into practice. But equally important, I work with families who are struggling to navigate the emotionally difficult and often ill- defined path that follows a diagnosis of dementia.

Currently, Ohio is the only state in the nation without a comprehensive state Alzheimer's plan. The passage of Senate Bill 24 and the creation of a State Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Task Force is the first step forward in establishing accountability and systematic policies to address this health crisis. Our patients, families, caregivers and communities deserve a strategic and comprehensive program that will support them.

The numbers speak for themselves-- 5.8 million Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's disease and 200,000 of them are under the age of 65. This number is expected to reach 14 million by 2050.

In Ohio, there is an estimated 220,000 people diagnosed with some form of dementia.

In 2019, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost \$290 billion and may skyrocket to 1.1 trillion dollars by 2050. Medicaid costs to care for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias total an estimated \$44 billion and will rise more than 300 percent by 2050.

More than 16 million Americans provide unpaid care to those with Alzheimer's and other forms

of dementia. Last year, 18.5 billion hours of unpaid care was provided with a value of more than \$234 billion dollars.

What the numbers don't offer are solutions to address the fact that dementia is often under diagnosed or misdiagnosed every year leaving vulnerable seniors at risk.

The numbers don't guide us to an understanding of how a community—banks, hospitals restaurants and stores can safely support those living with dementia.

The numbers don't provide a roadmap for how professionals, family members and business can protect those with dementia from abuse and exploitation.

The numbers don't offer a comprehensive plan for professional-caregivers in best practices for care.

The numbers don't offer guidance, services and support to family members who struggle to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system while simultaneously trying to cope with losing a loved one-- long before they are gone.

These issues can only be addressed with the establishment of a state Alzheimer's Plan produced by a multidisciplinary task force to offer direction and oversight. The creation of guidelines to support consistent care, evidence based programs, comprehensive training, policies and community involvement are essential in addressing this health crisis that Ohioans are facing.

I urge the committee to pass Senate Bill 24.

Respectfully,

Lori Stevic-Rust, PhD ABPP