



March 18, 2025

The Honorable, Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Health & Human Services Committee
Rhode Island Statehouse
Providence, 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 5619 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Rhode Island Program to Address Alzheimer’s Disease

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we express our strong support for House Bill No. 5619, recognizing that healthcare is an essential component of a thriving life and a key driver of economic stability. Through the LIFT UNITED initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we work to ensure that all Rhode Islanders—regardless of income—have access to the healthcare services they need to live healthy, stable, and productive lives. Without access to quality healthcare, individuals and families face more significant financial hardship, workforce instability, and economic insecurity.

House Bill 5619 takes a crucial step in advancing public health by requiring the Rhode Island Department of Health to incorporate dementia risk factors and prevention strategies into both public awareness campaigns and healthcare provider education materials. As Alzheimer’s and related dementias continue to impact a growing number of Rhode Island families, this proactive legislation will ensure that individuals, caregivers, and medical professionals are better equipped with the knowledge needed to promote early intervention, support brain health, and reduce the long-term impact of this disease on our communities.

United Way of Rhode Island’s 211 helpline consistently receives inquiries from families in search of memory care resources, caregiver support, and access to affordable long-term care. In 2023, 211 handled more than 3,500 aging-related referrals, including those specifically connected to Alzheimer’s services, dementia diagnoses, and caregiving supports. By investing in public and professional education, this bill addresses a growing need for accessible information and pathways to care—ultimately strengthening health outcomes for older adults and those who care for them.

Healthcare is not a luxury but a fundamental right and a critical factor in economic stability. Ensuring

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

all Rhode Islanders have access to affordable, high-quality care—including tools for dementia prevention and caregiver support—will lead to stronger communities, a healthier workforce, and reduced long-term financial strain on individuals and families. Supporting House Bill No. 5619 will help advance health equity and create a Rhode Island where everyone can access the care they need to live with dignity and stability. We urge your support in making healthcare access a priority for all.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way of Rhode Island