



RI Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 771
www.health.ri.gov

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02908

RE: H 5619 – Relating to Health and Safety -- Rhode Island Program to Address Alzheimer's Disease

Dear Chair Donovan:

Please accept this letter of support for H 5619, legislation that would require the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to incorporate information about dementia risk factors and risk reduction into public education and healthcare professional education materials. This Act would take effect upon passage.

Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, together, are considered a public health crisis. According to the Rhode Island Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, there are more than 22,000 people in Rhode Island living with Alzheimer's disease.¹ In Rhode Island, an estimated 11.4% of adults older than 65 have Alzheimer's Disease.²

Alzheimer's is the fifth leading cause of death among adults 65 or older.² According to 2020 US Census, there are 26,783 adults 85 or older in Rhode Island, one of the highest percent in the country and shares the highest percent (2.4%) in New England with Maine and Connecticut.³ Age is the greatest risk factor for developing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

RIDOH has been working on integrating brain health messaging into programs across RIDOH's Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management, as well as in RIDOH's Tobacco Control Program. RIDOH has contracts in place and works closely with many members of the Rhode Island Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD), and the Rhode Island Care Transformation Collaborative to implement measures within primary care to improve diagnosis of Alzheimer's and support caregivers. RIDOH also currently offers information on ADRD on RIDOH's website (See: [RIDOH ADRD Program](#)). As written, H 5619 should not have a fiscal impact on RIDOH's ADRD Program.

¹ RI Alzheimer's Association, Accessed March 16, 2025, [Rhode Island Chapter | Alzheimer's Association](#)

² RI Alzheimer's Association, Accessed March 16, 2025, [Rhode Island Alzheimer's Facts and Figures 2024](#)

³ The Older Population, 202 US Census Brief, Accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/2020/census-briefs/c2020br-07.pdf>

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome M. Larkin", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Mia A. Ackerman
The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy