

Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement Statement for the Record

United States Senate Special Committee on Aging Hearing on "Renewing Our Commitment: How the Older Americans Act Uplifts Families Living with Aging-Related Diseases"

November 5, 2025

The Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement for the record to the Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing entitled "Renewing Our Commitment: How the Older Americans Act Uplifts Families Living with Aging-Related Diseases". The Association and AIM thank the Committee for its continued leadership on issues important to the millions of individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their caregivers. This statement highlights the importance of policies and programs within the Older Americans Act (OAA) that can help meet the unique needs of our nation's growing number of Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Founded in 1980, the Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's and other dementias through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. AIM is the Association's advocacy affiliate, working in a strategic partnership to make Alzheimer's a national priority. Together, the Alzheimer's Association and AIM advocate for policies to fight Alzheimer's disease, including increased investment in research, improved care and support, and the development of approaches to reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Over 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and by 2050, this number is expected to rise to nearly 13 million. Alzheimer's is one of the costliest conditions in the United States. In 2024, total payments for all individuals with Alzheimer's or other dementia are estimated at \$360 billion (not including unpaid caregiving). By 2050, these costs are projected to rise to nearly \$1 trillion. These mounting costs threaten to bankrupt families, businesses, and our health care system. Unfortunately, our work is only growing more urgent.

As the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias increases, so does the need for care and support services for those living with these diseases. The OAA provides federal funding and the necessary infrastructure to deliver vital support programs and social services to our nation's seniors, including those with Alzheimer's disease. These critical programs are utilized by millions of low-income Americans and provide for such services as home-delivered and congregate nutrition services; in-home supportive services; transportation; caregiver support; community service employment; health and wellness programs; the long-term care ombudsman program; services to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults;

and other supportive services. Twenty-four percent of older individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias who have Medicare are also eligible for Medicaid, punctuating the need within the Alzheimer's community for such programs as the Senior Nutrition Program and the National Family Caregiver Support Program.

We strongly support the bipartisan Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2025 (S. 2120), led by Chairmen Cassidy (R-LA) and Scott (R-FL) and Ranking Members Sanders (I-VT) and Gillibrand (D-NY), which includes expanded efforts to address social isolation, a pressing issue for the aging population and especially for individuals with dementia. Social isolation exacerbates cognitive decline, mental health issues, and physical health risks. The Alzheimer's Association's Dementia Care Practice Recommendations emphasize the benefits of support groups in reducing isolation and improving outcomes, including quality of life and communication with family members. The establishment of an Advisory Council on Social Isolation and Loneliness is an important step toward better understanding and responding to this growing public health issue.

We are grateful that the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-131) included the bipartisan Younger Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act, championed by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Bob Casey (D-PA), to codify existing authority to provide services to individuals living with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease under the National Family Caregiver Support Program and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We appreciate that this legislation continues to include this important language, ensuring that individuals with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease and related dementias can access the supports they need. These services are particularly helpful for those who may still be raising young children, in the workforce, or struggling to secure an accurate diagnosis—facing stigma and delays that compound the disease's toll.

Supporting Dementia Caregivers

Eighty-three percent of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends, or other unpaid caregivers, and the emotional, physical, and financial costs can be overwhelming. Nearly half of all caregivers who provide help to older adults do so for someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia. In 2024 alone, more than 12 million Americans provided unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias, contributing an estimated 19 billion hours of care valued at \$413 billion. Of the total lifetime cost of caring for someone with dementia, 70 percent is borne by families — either through out-of-pocket health and long-term care expenses or from the value of unpaid care.

Community services provided under the OAA offer invaluable support for individuals living with dementia, and, due to the unique challenges they face, it is paramount to continue prioritizing care coordination efforts within communities during the reauthorization process. Dementia often requires a multi-disciplinary approach involving medical professionals, caregivers, social workers, and community support services. Effective coordination helps caregivers navigate the

complex healthcare and social service systems and ensures that caregivers and health care professionals collaborate seamlessly, providing comprehensive care tailored to their individual needs. Challenges such as cognitive decline, communication difficulties, and fluctuating symptoms necessitate specialized strategies for coordination. Initiatives promoting dementia-friendly communities and caregiver education programs play crucial roles in enhancing coordination and support networks. By prioritizing and refining care coordination, communities can offer a better quality of life and support for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

We are also deeply grateful for the reauthorization and extension of the RAISE Family Caregivers Act. The Alzheimer's Association and AIM have been strong advocates for the RAISE Family Caregivers Act since it was introduced in Congress. As the caregiving crisis intensifies, especially in the Alzheimer's community, this extension will ensure the Department of Health and Human Services can fully implement a national strategy to better support unpaid caregivers. These dedicated caregivers greatly benefit from increased resources, training, and support to help them navigate the strain of caregiving and improve their health and quality of life.

Strengthening the Dementia Care Workforce

We ask that the Committee prioritize policies to reduce barriers and ensure individuals living with dementia have adequate access to long-term care and home- and community-based services. People living with Alzheimer's and other dementias make up a significant portion of all long-term care residents, comprising 49 percent of all residents in nursing homes and 34 percent of all residents in assisted living communities and other residential care facilities. Given our constituents' intensive use of these services, the quality of this care is of the utmost importance. As a result, we encourage the Committee to consider policies to enhance long-term care and support services for the growing number of Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias who are eligible to receive OAA services.

A strong dementia care workforce is needed to ensure quality care for aging populations. For example, the fourth most common chronic condition in participants using adult day services is Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, and 25 percent of individuals using adult day services have Alzheimer's or other dementias. Access to these services can help people with dementia live in their homes longer and improve the quality of life for both themselves and their caregivers. In-home care services, such as personal care services, companion services, or skilled care, can allow individuals living with dementia to stay in familiar environments and be of considerable assistance to caregivers. Adult day services can provide social engagement and assistance with daily activities.

To ensure that care providers are equipped to meet the specific needs of individuals with dementia, we strongly support the bipartisan Accelerating Access to Dementia & Alzheimer's Provider Training (AADAPT) Act (H.R. 3747), introduced by Representatives Troy Balderson

(R-OH-20) and Nanette Barragán (D-CA-44), which would provide grants to expand virtual education and training on Alzheimer's and dementia so that more primary care providers better understand detection, diagnosis, care, and treatment – and so that more providers in rural and underserved communities can receive dementia training.

By prioritizing a well-trained dementia care workforce, Congress can ensure that individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementias receive timely, accurate diagnoses and high-quality, coordinated care, no matter where they live. This investment will not only improve outcomes for patients and ease burdens on family caregivers but also reduce overall health care costs by minimizing unnecessary hospitalizations and specialist referrals. The AADAPT Act is a critical step toward building a more equitable and effective dementia care system nationwide.

Advancing Brain Health Through Evidence-Based Interventions

The Alzheimer's Association and AIM encourage the Committee to recognize the opportunity to promote brain health and risk reduction through evidence-based lifestyle interventions. The Alzheimer's Association U.S. Study to Protect Brain Health Through Lifestyle Intervention to Reduce Risk, known as U.S. POINTER, found that a structured lifestyle program - focusing on things like improved nutrition, physical exercise, cognitive engagement, and health monitoring - improved thinking and memory over two years, keeping brain function from declining as it normally would with aging. Participants in the structured program performed like people who were one to almost two years younger, suggesting that these habits can help the brain stay resilient against age-related changes. U.S. POINTER is the first large-scale, randomized controlled clinical trial to demonstrate that an accessible and sustainable healthy lifestyle intervention can protect cognitive function in diverse populations in communities across the United States. The results present a compelling case for investments in preventive brain health programs targeting nutrition, physical exercise, cognitive stimulation and cardiovascular wellness.

OAA-funded programs, especially those authorized under Title III-B (Supportive Services), Title III-C (Nutrition Services), and Title III-D (Health Promotion), offer the infrastructure to deliver these interventions where older adults already access services. Implementing POINTER-style models into community-based programs would empower older Americans to engage in brain-healthy behaviors in familiar and trusted settings.

This is not only a brain health issue - it is an economic imperative. Reducing cognitive decline could help reduce future care costs and support healthy, productive aging. As you move forward in the OAA reauthorization process, we urge the Committee to support funding, legislation, and public health initiatives that bring these proven brain health interventions into more communities.

Conclusion

The Alzheimer's Association and AIM appreciate the Committee's steadfast support and commitment to advancing issues important to the millions of individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementias, as well as their caregivers. We look forward to working with you and again ask that you keep individuals living with dementia in mind as the Older Americans Act reauthorization effort moves through the legislative process.