

THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS.®

Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter

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April 13, 2023

Dear Members of the Finance Committee:

The Alzheimer's Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting people living with Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia. We are writing today to share our support for SF 2934, the Senate Human Services Omnibus Budget Bill.

The challenges facing the long-term care workforce are well-documented and we support efforts this budget bill takes to address this crisis. However, we are particularly grateful that this bill also focuses on unpaid caregivers and the foundational role they play in keeping loved ones at home, where they want to be, and out of more expensive and intensive settings like an Assisted Living or nursing home. In 2022, 163,000 Minnesota caregivers provided 225 million hours of unpaid care for a loved one with dementia valued at \$5.259 billion dollars. This comes at a cost. The stress and emotional toll of caring for a loved one with dementia leads to higher rates of chronic conditions like depression or hypertension and caregivers are burning out at increasing rates. Caregiver burnout is the leading reason for placement in a more expensive residential setting.

With this in mind, here are the items we strongly support:

- Thank you for investing \$6.876 million dollars towards respite care for older adults and people with dementia. Expanding access to respite care is a top priority and we hope that as the final budget is developed we can secure base funding for much needed respite care funding.
- We also appreciate the major investment this bill makes in the Live Well at Home grant program. The infusion of resources for this proven program will help more elders and people with dementia remain at home with the people they love and the community they know.

We are also excited to see an investment in the following programs:

- We appreciate the one-time funding to develop a payment model for PACE programs, which will improve the support for seniors with complex health needs.
- This bill makes a much-needed rate increase for the Elderly Waiver Program
- Reducing the burden of the MA spenddown is a welcome step in the right direction
- Resources for nursing homes will also make a difference for our members and we were glad to see additional funding
- We appreciate this investment in the Ombudsman for Long Term Care.

The Alzheimer's Association is grateful for the leadership of Chair Hoffman and the Human Services Committee on elder care issues. We urge the Senate to maintain the strong Senate Position as you prepare to reach a compromise on a final budget bill with the House.

Sincerely,

Sam Smith
State Affairs Manager
Alzheimer's Association