



March 16, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, I am writing to share our support for the Senate Supplemental Human Services Budget. We made tremendous progress last year, including a historic investment in the Elderly Waiver, but more work needs to be done so that people living with dementia and their care partners can access the care they need in the community of their choice.

We strongly support the inclusion of additional one-time funding for SF 3575, which provides grant funding for respite care programs that serve people with dementia. Unpaid or informal caregivers are the backbone of Minnesota's long-term services and supports ecosystem, with dementia care partners providing 156 million hours of unpaid care that would have cost \$5.3 billion if born by the state. Investing in caregiver supports like respite care empowers family members and friends to continue the hard, necessary work of keeping a loved one at home instead of an expensive and intensive residential setting.

While there is much to like in this bill, the Alzheimer's Association is hopeful that the final bill will include SF 4044 as amended and create additional consumer protections for residents living in "exempt" settings. We also hope the legislature continues to take steps towards creating a PACE program in Minnesota.

Thank you to Chair Hoffman, Sen. Maye Quade for carrying SF 3575, and the Human Services Committee for developing a promising bill that makes much needed investments in elder care. Minnesotans living with dementia and their caregivers can't wait another year for additional respite care funding.

Sincerely,

Sam Smith
State Affairs Director
Alzheimer's Association, MN-ND