

April 6, 2021

Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter

7900 West 78th Street, Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN 55439

p 952.830.0512

f 952.830.0513

REGIONAL OFFICES

Minnesota

Duluth

Fergus Falls

Rochester

St. Cloud

St. Paul

North Dakota

Bismarck

Fargo

Grand Forks

Maddock

Minot

RE: House Public Safety Omnibus Bill, HF 1078

Dear Chair Carlos Mariani and Members of the House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the omnibus public safety budget, HF 1078. And thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee in February in support of HF 28, authored by Rep. Cheryl Youakim.

The Alzheimer's Association strongly supports and thanks the committee for the inclusion of \$200,000 to expand Minnesota's Crime Alert Network System to include a missing person with dementia category. This statewide communications network under the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension will enable law enforcement agencies to quickly alert the public about a missing person with dementia. Six out of 10 individuals with dementia will wander at some point, and many will wander repeatedly. We know that if individuals with dementia are not found within 24 hours, up to fifty percent suffer serious injury or death.

However, we are asking for the training component from HF 28, which would provide \$400,000 in each year of the biennium for optional dementia training for first responders, to be included in your budget bill. First responders frequently interact with individuals who have Alzheimer's and other dementias in a variety of settings - and this will only increase as the number of Minnesotans with dementia continues to grow. They are generally among the first to be contacted regarding emergencies, abuse and exploitation. **Many first responders receive little or no formal training to prepare them for the unique physical, behavioral, and communication challenges related to people with dementia.**

This training will help first responders to recognize individuals with cognitive impairment, to effectively intervene in cases involving individuals who are cognitively impaired, and to secure the safety of missing, abused, or exploited individuals with dementia. It is an important step to ensuring different law enforcement agencies coordinate with each other and act with the same urgency when a person with dementia goes missing or is in crisis.

We remain encouraged by the support this bipartisan legislation received from first responders, including the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, the Fire Chiefs Association, the Fire Marshalls Association, the Fire Departments Association, and the Ambulance Association.

The Alzheimer's Association, again, encourages the inclusion of the funding for optional first responder dementia training in the final omnibus public safety budget bill. We look forward to working with the committee to ensure that people with dementia are safe in their communities and that the first responders who are called when they need help have the tools, training, and resources needed to help this growing population, especially when they are in crisis.

Thank you for including the funding to expand the Crime Alert Network System in Minnesota and for supporting Minnesotans with dementia, their families, and their caregivers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. With deep appreciation,



Josh Ney, Manager of State Affairs

Alzheimer's Association, Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter

jdney@alz.org | 651-789-5863