

PUBLIC COMMENT
Nevada Patient Protection Commission
November 9, 2020

Good morning Chair Khan and members of the commission. For the record, my name is Charles Duarte, Dementia Care Director for the Alzheimer's Association in Nevada. Our goal is to raise awareness around Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and to increase the numbers of patients and caregivers who actually receive an early and accurate diagnosis.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias represent the largest hidden public health crisis impacting more than 5 million people nationwide at a cost of \$305 billion. In Nevada, there are an estimated 49,000 individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. By 2025, that number is expected to rise to 64,000; the third fastest rate of increase in the nation. According to 2015 survey data, one in six Nevadans 45 years or older report confusion or memory loss that is worsening. Nearly half of them have not spoken with a health care provider about it.

In 2017, Nevadans with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias experienced 1,712 emergency department visits per 1,000; an increase of 34% from 2007. Dementia also accounts for more than 25% of all hospital readmissions in Nevada. It is estimated that Nevada Medicaid will spend \$203 million dollars this year for people with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, and that cost is expected to increase almost 37% by 2025.

Equally important is the impact of Alzheimer's disease on families in Nevada. It is estimated there are 153,000 unpaid caregivers in Nevada. These are spouses, children, friends and other family members who have to take time off from work to care for their loved ones. It is estimated they provide over 175 million unpaid care hours with a dollar value of more than \$2.2 billion.

It is also estimated that 48% of residents in nursing homes have a dementia diagnosis. Most long-term care residents with dementia also have higher rates of multiple chronic conditions, making them vulnerable to COVID-19. According to Nevada Health Response, the State's COVID-19

reporting dashboard, there have been 357 resident deaths in skilled nursing and assisted living facilities along with 8 staff deaths.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias clearly have a tremendous impact on our health system from a cost and utilization perspective, and this is only expected to increase. The cost of this care is not only a burden to Medicare, but also to Nevada Medicaid which covers an estimated 60% of all long-term care costs in Nevada. This cost burden to the State has the potential to "crowd-out" other expenditures, including vital state services such as education and public safety.

Given this, I would like to suggest the Patient Protection Commission consider the implications of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias on our long-term care and acute medical systems, as well as on the lives of those living with the disease or caring for someone with the dementia. I am also available to present a more detailed presentation to the Commission as a part of a future agenda.

I will be glad to answer any questions.

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