

Testimony for Public Hearing
House Health and Human Services Committee

March 14, 2017

James Covell
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Chairman Hawkins and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is James Covell and I am the Public Policy lead for the Alzheimer's Association. In that role, I have had the honor of working with both caregivers and persons with dementia, as we all work to figure out how to support quality of life and how to minimize the more traumatic symptoms of the disease. The Alzheimer's Association supports Senate Bill 68.

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia disease do not discriminate, they are a human disease. They have a 100% mortality rate, and there are no cures, treatments, or effective prevention measures. They devastate families, and place tremendous burden on our medical system. Supporting Kansas caregivers is key to easing the coming public health crisis of Alzheimer's disease, as the number of afflicted individuals is expected to increase by over 11,000 by 2025. Care planning is one of the few things that can help families obtain peace of mind, and keep dementia patients in their home longer.

The provisions in this bill, which would allow caregivers to receive the training they need to effectively care for their loved ones, are tantamount to increasing the quality of life of caregivers. On top of this, research shows that provisions such as this one allow dementia patients to live in their homes for a longer period before moving to assisted living facilities. This not only places a lower burden on the Medicaid and Medicare systems to finance those services but it will help increase the quality of life of over 150,00 family dementia caregivers and their loved ones.

We ask you to join us and the over 150,000 family dementia caregivers in Kansas and vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Covell". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

James Covell