

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – Nov. 14, 2017

State Legislative Update:

A package of 7 bills was developed primarily by Rep. Skrowonski's office last month. Of the 7, 6 have been introduced in the senate or house and are in committee. These are:

[AB-628/SB 517](#) **Silver Alert Referral** (Skowronski, Ken – Assembly & Stroebel, Duey - Senate) Referrals for subjects of alerts for missing adults and operator's license review. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health & Senate Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues***

This simple fix ensures that if a credible Silver Alert has been issued the law enforcement agency that has issued the alert for the missing adult at risk, commonly known as a "Silver Alert," to refer the person making the report and any guardian of the missing person to a local aging and disability resource center. If the subject of such an alert was driving a vehicle when he or she was reported missing, this bill also requires the law enforcement agency to notify the Department of Transportation. If DOT receives such a notification, DOT must review the driver's license of the person to determine if restrictions should be imposed on the person's license for the safety of the person or the public.

[AB-629/SB 518](#) **Adult Guardianship** (Skowronski, Ken – Assembly & Stroebel, Duey - Senate) Uniform adult guardianship jurisdiction. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health and Senate Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues***

This bill incorporates the uniform act into Wisconsin law with some modifications. Generally, the bill addresses court jurisdiction for guardianships of adults.

In our increasingly mobile society, differences in laws between states can create barriers to a guardian exercising their authority across state lines. Adult guardianship jurisdiction issues can arise in situations involving individuals who live part-time (seasonally) in another state, transfer of guardianship, and long-distance caregiving. Uniform Adult Guardianship in Wisconsin would simplify the process for resolving a jurisdictional adult guardianship issue – allowing cases to be settled more quickly, and provide more predictable outcomes. This bill allows Wisconsin courts to communicate with other courts when a jurisdictional issue arises.

[AB-630](#) **Dementia Specialist** (Skowronski, Ken) Dementia specialist certification. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health***

This bill would create a 40-hour voluntary dementia specialist certification. The bill prohibits any person from using the title “dementia specialist” or “certified dementia specialist” without the certification. If a person successfully completes an instructional program that provides the instruction specified in the bill, the instructional program administrator must certify that person as a dementia specialist. The goal of the instructional program for certification is improving caregiving for individuals with Alzheimer’s and dementia, creating new opportunities for professional development and helping facilities attract and retain new workers. This bill would ensure that everyone using the term “Certified Dementia Specialists” would have a standard knowledge base. Those looking to place their loved ones in care facilities would know that a “Certified Dementia Specialist” completed a state-sponsored training program. A certified dementia specialist would be trained in the challenging behaviors and situations that often arise with a patient with Alzheimer’s and dementia.

[AB-631](#)/[SB 528](#) **Caregiver Tax Credit** (Skowronski, Ken – Assembly & Testin, Patrick - Senate) Creating a nonrefundable individual income tax credit for certain expenses incurred by a family caregiver to assist a qualified family member. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health and Senate Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues***

Across the country, 40 million people are caregivers for family members. Of those 40 million, caregiving is a primary responsibility for some, as they have left the workforce, or reduced the amount of time they are working to care for a loved one with a significant illness. Family caregivers are unpaid, but the economic value of their care is in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Caregiving for a loved one is not just an incredible responsibility, but it can also be emotionally stressful and financially burdensome. Family caregivers who leave the workforce could lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages and benefits over their lifetimes. To help alleviate the costs associated with caregiving, this bill offers a \$1,000 tax credit to qualifying families for expenses related to caregiving.

[AB-632](#)/[SB 527](#) **Alzheimer's Awareness Grants** (Rohrkaste, Michael – Assembly & Moulton, Terry - Senate) Grants for Alzheimer's disease and dementia awareness and making an appropriation. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health and Senate Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues***

A common theme surrounding Alzheimer’s and dementia is a lack of awareness. Many Wisconsinites don’t know that they or their loved one is living with one of these diseases, and if they do know, many don’t know where to turn. There are many governmental and private resources throughout the state for those living with these diseases and their caregivers. These organizations offer different forms of assistance, but many of our fellow Wisconsinites are not aware of all

options. The bill directly addresses this problem by allowing DHS to distribute up to \$500,000 in grants to community programs across the state to raise awareness for Alzheimer's and dementia resources. By raising awareness, we are hoping to catch these diseases sooner in those living with them and also to raise awareness for caregivers, co-workers, friends, and family about the resources available to them when caring for a loved one.

AB-633 Palliative Care Council (Snyder, Patrick) Establishing a palliative care council. ***Referred to Assembly Mental Health***

This bill would establish a Palliative Care Advisory Council consisting of doctors, healthcare professionals, advocates, hospital administrators, and medical students. Wisconsin would join 21 other states in establishing a similar council that is directed to consult with and advise the Department of Health Services. The Palliative Care Advisory Council would meet to positively impact the policies of DHS and the Legislature regarding palliative care. The goal of the council would be to understand and evaluate the impact palliative care has on families, experiences of families that have used palliative care services, practices and protocols of doctors within the palliative care field, and areas in which palliative care can be improved. The board would be required to develop biennial legislative reports and sunset after 10 years.

Note: The only proposal in the package that has not yet been introduced is the Virtual Dementia Tour License funding.

Action Steps: Please connect with your Senator and Representative regarding these bills and how they impact older adults and caregivers in your community. It is especially important to reach out if your legislator is a member of one of the two committees:

Assembly Committee on Mental Health

Representative Tittl (Chair)

Representative Jagler (Vice-Chair)

Representative Ballweg

Representative Novak

Representative Sanfelippo

Representative Snyder

Representative VanderMeer

Representative Spiros

Representative Considine

Representative Brostoff

Representative Zepnick

Representative Sargent

Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Military Affairs and Senior Issues

Senator Testin (Chair)

Senator Feyen (Vice-Chair)

Senator Marklein

Senator Ringhand

Senator Erpenbach

Federal Legislative Update:

BOLD: The [Building our Largest Dementia \(BOLD\) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act](#) (S. 2076/H.R. 4356), [introduced Monday](#), will equip our nation to address Alzheimer's disease as an urgent public health issue and promote interventions like increasing early detection and diagnosis, reducing risk, and preventing avoidable hospitalizations.

The bill would create an Alzheimer's public health infrastructure across the country to implement effective Alzheimer's interventions focused on public health issues such as increasing early detection and diagnosis, reducing risk and preventing avoidable hospitalizations. The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act would also increase implementation of the Healthy Brain Initiative's *Public Health Road Map* nationwide by establishing Alzheimer's centers of excellence, providing cooperative agreements to public health departments, and increasing data collection, analysis and timely reporting. Learn more about the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act below.

Specifically, the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act would direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to:

Establish Alzheimer's Centers of Excellence:

- The Centers will increase education of public health officials, health care professionals, and the public on Alzheimer's, brain health, and health disparities.
- The Centers will also provide technical assistance to public health departments across the country in implementing effective Alzheimer's interventions.
- These interventions will focus on priorities such as increasing early detection and diagnosis, reducing risk, preventing avoidable hospitalizations, reducing health disparities, supporting the needs of caregivers and supporting care planning for people living with the disease.
- Finally, the Centers will expand innovative public private partnerships that focus on addressing cognitive impairment and health disparities.

Award cooperative agreements to public health departments:

- This funding will help public health departments implement effective Alzheimer's interventions, including those identified by the Alzheimer's Centers of Excellence.
- This funding will also help public health departments implement strategic actions identified in the Healthy Brain Initiative's Public Health Road Map.

Increase data collection, analysis and timely reporting:

- Cooperative agreements to public or nonprofit private entities will increase the analysis and timely public reporting of data on Alzheimer's, caregiving, and health disparities.
- This data will be collected using tools like the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).
- This funding will also help monitor the progress of the Alzheimer's and caregiving objectives in the Healthy People 2020 report.

ACTION STEPS: Please do [send an email to Congress](#), but you can have a far greater impact by also taking the following actions:

- **Call** their health aide in DC or a staff member you've met in their district office. See the link below for sample talking points.
- **Submit a letter to the editor** of your local paper using a sample located at the link below.
- **Post on Facebook and Twitter** using [these social media graphics](#) and the sample posts below. Please be sure to "tag" or "mention" your member of Congress:

We need your help, @MEMBER_HANDLE. Please support #BOLDAlzheimersAct to help improve the lives of those living with Alzheimer's. #ENDALZ

Alzheimer's is incurable & taking thousands of lives in STATE_ABBREVIATION, ask @MEMBER_HANDLE to support the #BOLDAlzheimersAct. #ENDALZ

Here is a LINK to sample letters to Congress and other helpful resources regarding the BOLD bill:

https://alzimpact.org/priorities/bold_alzheimers_act?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%20Round-Up%20November%209%202017&utm_content=Weekly%20Round-Up%20November%209%202017+CID_fb5b0b3d3ff2aab8bbe5874c3dd3a936&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor%20Email%20Marketing&utm_term=website