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Idaho State Senate

SENATOR MARK R. HARRIS

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
Co-Chair Senator Mark Harris
Co-Chair Representative Llana Rubel

Dear Joint Legislative Oversight Committee.

Today, an estimated 5.6 million Americans aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease. By 2050, there are projected to be nearly a million new cases every year. To date, more than 26,000 Idahoans are living with Alzheimer's and other dementia related disease. This figure is expected to increase to over 33,000 by 2025. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death for Idahoans.

Caring for people with Alzheimer's in Idaho is projected to cost Medicaid \$144 million in 2019. By 2025, this number is expected to increase by 34.7%. Medical bills are 23 times higher for people with Alzheimer's and other dementia covered by Medicaid and Medicare than people without Alzheimer's and other dementia also on Medicaid and Medicare.

Alzheimer's is a devastating disease, but its impact is not just on those with the disease. Alzheimer's affects entire families, causing financial hardships. To date, there are more than 85,000 caregivers in Idaho giving hours of voluntary care.

Numerous state agencies administer a variety of programs critical to people with dementia, such as respite care, nutritional care, and public health. Additional critical state efforts include regulatory oversight pertaining to the licensure of care facilities, enforcement of training requirements, and elder abuse protections. Local law enforcement are often first responders to crisis experienced by those with dementia. Unfortunately, these efforts are often siloed with multiple state agencies each working separately from one another. This lack of coordination hinders the ability of Idaho to evaluate the effectiveness of policy efforts across the spectrums of programs serving those with Alzheimer's and their families. This in turn makes it more difficult for the state to keep a strategic Alzheimer's State plan updated, executed and relevant to the change in health care.

We request that OPE study and make recommendations in the following five areas.

Study Idaho agency coordination of efforts to address the increases in Alzheimer's disease and other dementias that lie ahead. Identify mechanisms whereby state actions can be centrally coordinated and overseen.

Identify gaps and needs within state agencies as well as any potential cost savings that may be realized by eliminating duplicity.

Review and report on the progress of the Idaho State Alzheimer's Plan, endorsed by the legislature in HCR 34 in 2013.

Provide information concerning the infrastructure Idaho has in place regarding programs, services, regulations and laws addressing Alzheimer's disease and other dementia and their effectiveness.

Explore ways in which Idaho can limit the impact of Alzheimer's disease and other dementia long-term on Idaho's budget, patients, caregivers, and healthcare systems by building on successful chronic disease programs in Idaho and on Alzheimer's disease and related dementia programs in neighboring states.

The study would be a significant step in articulating the state's commitment to policies and actions that support its citizens affected by the disease and preparing the state for the enormous increases in Alzheimer's disease and other dementia that lie ahead.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Senator Mark Harris



Representative Rick D. Youngblood



Senator Cherie Buckner-Webb



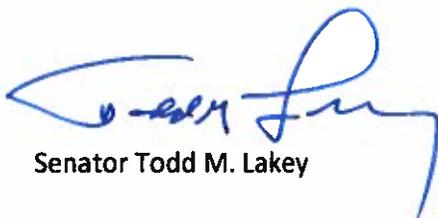
Representative Sage Dixon



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Representative Linda Hartgen



Senator Todd M. Lakey