



Alzheimer's Association, New York State Coalition

**Testimony on the FY 2023-24
Executive Budget Proposal**

Health/Medicaid

**Submitted to:
New York State Senate Finance Committee
Chair, Senator Liz Krueger**

&

**New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee
Chair, Assemblymember Helene Weinstein**

February 28, 2023





Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to submit testimony for today's Joint Legislative Budget hearing on Health and Medicaid.

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association, New York State Coalition (Coalition) is the only statewide organization supporting all New Yorkers affected by Alzheimer's disease and all other dementia. Its members, the seven Alzheimer's Association chapters in New York State, have delivered in-depth, expert services and education to constituents for more than 30 years.

The Coalition receives support for these activities from the Alzheimer's Community Assistance Program (AlzCAP), funded by the NYS Department of Health (DOH). AlzCAP is a statewide program providing a comprehensive array of community-based services for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their caregivers.

The Coalition currently receives **\$5 million** in AlzCAP funding from DOH to:

1. Promote greater understanding of Alzheimer's and other dementia, and the importance of early and accurate diagnosis;
2. Provide individualized care planning to individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's and other dementia;
3. Offer support groups, a free 24/7 Helpline, caregiver and community education to provide necessary information, and guidance and connection to resources;
4. Partner with houses of worship, senior centers, first responders, pharmacies, cultural organizations, financial planners, lawyers and many others to raise awareness of the Alzheimer's public health crisis and the services available through the Alzheimer's Association and trusted partners; and
5. Hire talented, committed and diverse staff to serve all New Yorkers affected by Alzheimer's and other dementia.

The partnership between the Coalition and DOH via AlzCAP has been a successful one. Over the course of the last five years, the Coalition has been able to provide the state with boots on the ground programs and services across all of New York's 62 counties. Even through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coalition and its staff deftly pivoted to offering virtual options and continued serving individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their caregivers.

The Coalition's successes can be seen in its reach and deliverables. Between 2018 and 2022 the Coalition and its staff ensured individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their caregivers received the following critical care:

- **36,086** Care Consultations;
- **8,197** Support Group Sessions, serving **42,103** individuals;
- **3,309** Caregiver Education and Training Programs, serving **29,990** individuals;
- **105,299** referrals and follow up calls from our 24/7 Help line;
- **3,070** Community Education Programs, serving **55,933** individuals;
- **1,148** Health Fairs, serving **60,296** individuals; and
- Training for Important Constituencies (individuals trained)
 - Medical Practices: **10,958**
 - Professionals from Health Systems/Long-Term Care Industry: **20,334**
 - Faith-Based Community Leaders: **11,637**
 - Gatekeepers: **15,305**
 - First Responders: **5,929**



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The data supports the fact that the Coalition and its staff, year after year, provide the state vital and robust person-to-person programs and services. While the Coalition continues its efforts to meet all goals, the current economic landscape and its funding level, along with the anticipated increase in Alzheimer's cases in New York, do not allow the Coalition to keep pace with the increased demand for these critical services without adding capacity.

The simple math is that \$5 million in 2018 is not worth the same as in 2023. While many of the cost drivers brought on by post-pandemic inflation are out of the state's control, several factors are. The state has not granted the Coalition a cost of living adjustment (COLA) in over 5 years. In addition, the state continues to drive salaries higher with its mandates. While encouraging workers to earn a living wage is admirable, and something the Alzheimer's Association supports, by not allocating additional funds to AlzCAP, the state has created another unfunded mandate whose costs must be borne out by the Coalition, a not-for-profit.

If the Coalition does not receive an **additional \$350,000** in the 2023-24 Enacted State Budget, it will be forced to cut programs and services provided to one of New York State's most vulnerable populations. Currently there are 410,000 New Yorkers living with Alzheimer's disease and that number is expected to grow to 460,000 by 2025.¹ There are also an estimated 563,000 informal family caregivers in New York, who themselves are at risk of poor health outcomes; 28% have depression and 17% are in poor physical health. These are the individuals and families who NEED these services to continue and any cut would negatively impact health outcomes for both those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

New York will spend \$220 billion on its state budget this year, while in 2018 it was \$168 billion – that is a 30% increase over the last 5 years. If the AlzCAP program kept pace with the state budget increases, it would be funded at \$6.5 million instead of \$5 million. The Coalition is not asking the state to increase the AlzCAP funding by that much; however, in absence of previous year's COLAs, the Coalition is respectfully requesting the state **increase AlzCAP funding by \$350,000** this year. This additional funding will ensure the Coalition can avoid a detrimental cut and can continue to provide the critical comprehensive array of community-based services for individuals with living Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their caregivers.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted:

Bill Gustafson
Director of Government Affairs, NYS
1003 New Loudon Road, Suite 201
Cohoes, New York 12047
518-252-0517
bcgustafson@alz.org

¹ Alzheimer's Association's 2022 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report

