

Date of Hearing: April 17, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE

Ash Kalra, Chair

AB 1955 (Limón) – As Amended April 10, 2018

SUBJECT: Alzheimer’s disease and dementia: public awareness campaign.

SUMMARY: This bill would require the Department of Aging (CDA) to develop and implement a public awareness campaign to raise public awareness of the warning signs of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia in order to promote early detection and accurate diagnosis. In implementing the public awareness campaign described in subdivision (a), the CDA shall be informed by the latest edition of the California “Alzheimer’s Clinical Care Guideline” that is published by the State Department of Public Health.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Existing law requires the California Department of Aging to designate various private nonprofit or public agencies as area agencies on aging to work for the interests of older Californians within a planning and service area and provide a broad array of social and nutritional services.
- 2) Existing law also requires the department to adopt policies and guidelines to carry out the purposes of the Alzheimer’s Day Care-Resource Center program, which provides access to specialized day care resource centers for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia-related disorders and support to their families and caregivers.
- 3) Existing law requires the department to make efforts to increase public awareness about areas of importance to California’s older individuals, their families, and other caregivers.
- 4) Existing law requires the department to establish an Aging Information and Education Fund, from funds made available pursuant to the annual California Budget Act, to implement public awareness of various issues, including at least medication management, elder abuse prevention, and a toll-free line for linkage to local service networks.

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill has not yet been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

Author’s Statement: “Alzheimer’s disease is the 3rd leading cause of death in California, and the only disease in the top ten causes of death without a proven cause, preventative action or cure. Although the onset of Alzheimer’s disease cannot yet be stopped or reversed, an early diagnosis allows people with dementia and their families a better chance of benefitting from treatment and research, an opportunity to participate in care and other end of life decisions, time to develop relationships with doctors and care partners and better management of co-occurring medical conditions. AB 1955 would implement a public awareness campaign to reduce stigma and raise public awareness of the warning signs of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia in order to promote early detection and accurate diagnosis. Early detection and diagnosis is a critical step towards improving health outcomes, lowering healthcare costs and ensuring access to beneficial interventions.”

BACKGROUND:

Alzheimer's disease is the third leading cause of death in California, and the only disease in the top ten causes of death without a proven cause, preventative action or cure. Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging - up to 5% of people with the disease show early signs of the disease when they are in their 40s or 50s. With age, the prevalence of Alzheimer's increases - at 65, 1 in 10 are impacted; by age 85, 1 in 3 are impacted. According to the Alzheimer's Association, the number of cases is growing rapidly across the entire United States population, and could nearly triple by 2050 to 13.8 million. In California today, 630,000 individuals are living with the disease.

There is a major disparity in detection and diagnosis. Evidence suggests that only 45 percent of patients have been diagnosed. Of those diagnosed patients, half were not informed of their diagnosis, and the diagnosis was not documented in their medical record. More than 15 million Americans provide unpaid care for people living with Alzheimer's or other dementias. Alzheimer's and dementias will cost the nation \$259 billion, making it the most costly disease in the United States. By 2050, these costs could rise as high as \$1.1 trillion.

Early detection and diagnosis is a critical step towards improving health outcomes, lowering healthcare costs and ensuring access to beneficial interventions. Early detection can also help health care providers deliver better care. Early detection can help physicians better manage a patient's comorbid conditions and avoid prescribing medications that may worsen cognition or function. And because early warning signs such as memory problems, confusion, personality changes and trouble with judgment, may be attributable to other sources, early detection of cognitive changes allows physicians to identify and treat reversible conditions that mimic cognitive impairment and dementia such as depression or vitamin deficiency. Furthermore, early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's and other dementias may help to reduce unmet needs of affected individuals who are more likely to experience disability.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

Alzheimer's Association – Sponsor
AARP
Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD)
California Association of Area Agencies on Aging
California Commission on Aging
California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association
Congress of California Seniors
Disability Rights California

Opposition

None on file.

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