



The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2020

Dear Senator Casey:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), including our nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, and to their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association and AIM write today in support of the Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act, which would address critical health and economic needs for older adults during this pandemic, including those living with Alzheimer's and other dementia.

People living with Alzheimer's and other dementia are at increased risk of having serious complications relating to COVID-19 due to their typical age and likelihood of coexisting conditions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), older adults and those with serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are at higher risk of getting very sick from this virus. There are currently 5.8 million Americans age 65 or older living with Alzheimer's dementia and more than 95 percent of people with the disease have one or more other chronic conditions. This includes 38 percent of people with Alzheimer's that also have heart disease and 37 percent that also have diabetes.

There are also over 16 million Americans providing unpaid care for loved ones living with Alzheimer's and other dementia. In 2019, these caregivers provided an estimated 18.6 billion hours of care valued at nearly \$244 billion. Approximately one-quarter of these caregivers are "sandwich generation" caregivers, meaning that they care not only for an aging parent, but also for children under age 18.

The Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act could benefit people living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, and their caregivers, in multiple ways. First, the bill would increase funding for inspections of nursing facilities and their infection control practices. At age 80, approximately 75 percent of people with Alzheimer's dementia live in a nursing home. These inspections could mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes, protect this vulnerable population and save lives. Second, the bill would ensure that seniors living on low, fixed incomes can afford the treatment they need if they are diagnosed with COVID-19. Finally, the bill would provide funding to ensure seniors have access to healthy food and other important home- and community-based services, which is especially important given the fact that 70 percent of all people with Alzheimer's live in the community. This increased funding would allow States and community-based providers to offer three meals a day, seven days a week during this emergency, provide shelf-stable food to more seniors through the Senior Food Box program, and provide respite care and other important support services to family caregivers.

Again, the Alzheimer's Association and AIM deeply appreciate your continued leadership on behalf of all Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia. If you have any questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Rachel Conant, Vice President of Federal Affairs, at rconant@alz-aim.org or at 202.638.7121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Egge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Egge
Chief Public Policy Officer
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs
Alzheimer's Association