



The Honorable Anthony Brown
United States House of Representatives
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2020

Dear Representative Brown:

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 in support of the Health Enterprise Zones Act (H.R. 7158), which would create incentives to attract health providers to work in health-disadvantaged communities.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's and, without significant action, nearly 14 million Americans will have Alzheimer's by 2050. This explosive growth will cause Alzheimer's costs to increase from an estimated \$305 billion in 2020 to more than \$1.1 trillion in 2050 (in 2020 dollars). These mounting costs threaten to bankrupt families, businesses, and our health care system. Unfortunately, our work is only growing more urgent.

Alzheimer's and other dementia disproportionately affect older blacks/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos than older whites. Black/African Americans are two to three times more likely to develop Alzheimer's than whites, and Hispanics/Latinos are one to two times more likely to develop Alzheimer's than whites. While these communities are disproportionately affected, they are less likely to receive a diagnosis. When they are diagnosed, they are typically diagnosed in the later stages of the disease, when they are more cognitively and physically impaired and therefore in need of more medical care. As a result, blacks/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos diagnosed with Alzheimer's use substantially more hospital, physician, and home health services and incur substantially higher costs for those services than whites with Alzheimer's.

The Health Enterprise Zones Act would help build a quality workforce in underserved communities by designating certain areas as "Health Enterprise Zones". These Zones would be based on measurable and documented health disparities and areas with poor health outcomes. Once designated, health providers in these Zones would be eligible for a variety of federal incentives, including tax incentives, loan repayment programs, federal grants and increased Medicare reimbursement. These innovative strategies build on a successful Maryland model that has been shown to improve health at lower costs.

Again, the Alzheimer's Association and AIM deeply appreciate your continued leadership on behalf of all Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia. We look forward to working with you to advance this bill and help address the longstanding and persistent health disparities in our communities. 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 stylized flourish at the end.

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