



The Honorable Abigail Spanberger
U.S. House of Representatives
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Katko
U.S. House of Representatives
2828 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

September 13, 2021

Dear Representatives Spanberger and Katko:

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 to thank you for introducing H.R. 5241, Linking Seniors to Needed Legal Services Act of 2021 which would create medical-legal partnerships to improve vulnerable elders' access to legal and social services.

The burden of Alzheimer's on individuals and families continues to grow. More Americans are living with the disease – it is estimated that currently 6.2 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's dementia. By 2050, that number is expected to rise to nearly 14 million. These individuals are at heightened risk for experiencing elder abuse. Elder abuse is the intentional or negligent act by any person that causes serious harm to an older adult. This harm may be physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and/or financial. As many as 62 percent of persons living with dementia experience psychological abuse, and as many as one-fourth have been physically abused. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of adults with dementia have experienced more than one form of abuse.

A study by the Legal Services Corporation found that adults facing cognitive challenges are often unable to distinguish when they actually require legal assistance on top of medical assistance, and even then may not be fully aware of the unique resources which exist to help them. In recent years, several states and localities have implemented innovative solutions to these access issues. Medical-legal partnerships are multidisciplinary teams which integrate clinical staff with social workers and lawyers at a single site of care to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach which will better serve the complex needs of this population of older Americans. By providing onsite care and direct interactions between social workers, attorneys, and health care providers, the likelihood of individuals, including those living with Alzheimer's or another dementia, accessing these services and gaining solutions to their challenges increases greatly.

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,

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

