



The Honorable Jon Tester
Chairman
The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
The Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

June 21, 2023

Dear Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Moran, Chairwoman Murray and Senator Rounds:

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 dementias and to their caregivers. We write to express our support for the bipartisan Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act (S. 495), which would allow our nation's veterans to remain independent longer and receive better access to long term care at assisted living facilities.

Nearly half a million American veterans have Alzheimer's — and as the population ages, that number is expected to grow. In 2015, an estimated 486,000 veterans were living with Alzheimer's. The annual number of veterans newly diagnosed with dementia has increased by more than 22 percent since 2008. For veterans, the prevalence may grow even faster in future years because they have a higher risk of developing dementia. The significant increase in the number of veterans with Alzheimer's and other dementias will place a heavy burden on the VA health care system, and in particular, nursing home care.

More than 60 percent of VA's costs of caring for those with Alzheimer's are attributed to nursing home care, which is traditionally more costly than receiving long term care services at assisted living facilities. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not pay for fees associated with assisted living facilities. In turn, many veterans are choosing to live in nursing homes even if they do not need such a comprehensive level of care.

By establishing a three-year pilot program for eligible veterans to receive assisted living care paid for by the VA, the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act would allow aging veterans to live more independently while receiving the level of care that most appropriately fits their needs. These resources are critical in serving the needs of veterans living with Alzheimer's and dementia, including those who have served in uniform. We applaud your work on ensuring the VA clinical staff has ample personnel and resources to address the needs of veterans living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association and AIM appreciate the Committee's steadfast support for veterans and their caregivers and the continued commitment to advancing issues important to the millions of military families affected by Alzheimer's and other dementia. If you have questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Sarah Tellock, Director of Congressional Affairs, at stellock@alz-aim.org or at 202.638.8676.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel M. Conant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Conant
Vice President, Federal Affairs
Alzheimer's Association