

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

November 12, 2019

Proclaiming Alzheimer’s Awareness Month and Encouraging Access to Mental Health Services for People with Dementia

Caring for a loved one with dementia can be both rewarding and challenging. Given the slow and relentless progression of Alzheimer’s disease, caregivers often provide increasingly intense levels of care over many years. This can lead to increased emotional stress and depression, new or worsening health problems of their own and financial strain due to the cost of providing care.

The purpose of Alzheimer’s Awareness Month is to educate the public about Alzheimer’s disease and reduce stigma for families seeking necessary services and support. Only 50% of people with dementia receive a diagnosis and only 50% of those people have that diagnosis recorded in their medical chart. As a result, they do not receive appropriate care for their cognitive symptoms or for other mental health and co-morbid chronic conditions. Some of the most promising research trials are developing drugs for people in the earliest stages of the disease. Without an early diagnosis, these people would not be able to benefit from these potentially disease altering medications.

Families and caregivers need to be aware that wandering is a common problem associated with dementia and Alzheimer’s and they should be informed about the LA FOUND program. LA FOUND was established by the Board of Supervisors in September

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2018, to find people who wander and reunite them with their families. It uses a system of voluntary trackable bracelets given to individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia, Autism, or Cognitive Brain Impairment.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors hereby proclaim November 2019 as "Alzheimer's Awareness Month" in Los Angeles County and encourage all residents to speak with their doctor about their cognitive health.

I, FURTHER MOVE that the Departments of Mental Health, Public Health, and Health Services:

- Establish a referral system to the LA FOUND program,
- Provide consistent trainings to County staff, caregivers, and providers on best practices for effectively serving populations with co-occurring dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and mental health or behavioral disorders by utilizing the State of California's Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Committee fact sheets and resources, and
- Provide updates on the aforementioned directives at every quarterly LA FOUND workgroup meeting.

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