

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

November 16, 2021

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

Alzheimer’s disease is a growing health risk for older populations. People with Alzheimer’s experience a loss in memory and other thinking abilities and often live with multiple other chronic health conditions. While there are a number of exciting research projects underway, there remains no cure for this disease and no way to slow its progress. As a result, the hundreds of thousands of Angelenos caring for loved ones living with Alzheimer’s disease or a related form of memory loss are of critical importance to ensuring the highest quality of life possible for their loved ones. The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated this issue, specifically in areas such as emotional/mental wellbeing, finances, and social isolation.

The purpose of Alzheimer’s Awareness Month is to educate Los Angeles County’s workforce, the public, and families about Alzheimer’s disease and promote available resources to assist people with Alzheimer’s. Only 50% of people with dementia receive a diagnosis and only half of those people have that diagnosis recorded in their medical

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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 also 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 in Los Angeles County. LA FOUND was established by the Board of Supervisors in September 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. Los Angeles County departments should continue to expand outreach and education for the LA FOUND program and explore how to improve linkages to related health and social services, in the interest of improving the quality of life and well-being of people with Alzheimer's disease and their families.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors hereby proclaim November 2021 as "Alzheimer's Awareness Month" in Los Angeles County; encourage all residents to speak with their doctor about their cognitive health; and direct all County departments to have their employees complete training titled LA Found: Assisting Critical Missing Persons available on the County's Learning Link website.

I, FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention to convene an advisory group comprised of Alzheimer's disease and

related dementia (ADRD) stakeholders to advance efforts, including targeted strategic planning, that can promote early detection of ADRD and reduce modifiable risk factors of dementia among at-risk groups in Los Angeles County (County);

- a. Work with the Department of Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services to establish a referral system to the LA FOUND program, for clients that meet criteria;
2. Direct the Department of Public Health to engage with the Alliance for Health Integration, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Mental Health, and other relevant partners to support such efforts:
- a. To promote early detection and reduce modifiable risk factors for dementia;
 - b. Focus on and elevate Los Angeles County's response for emergency preparedness for those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias;
and
 - c. Improve access to services for those living with co-occurring serious mental illness and cognitive impairment.

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