

Testimony
Department of Human Services
Human Services Committee
Representative Alon Wieland, Chairman
January 17, 2012

Chairman Wieland, members of the Human Services Committee, I am Jan Engan, Director of the Aging Services Division with the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS). I am here today to provide information about the Dementia Care Services Program administered by the Aging Services Division.

During the 2009 legislative session, the North Dakota legislature passed HB 1043 to provide dementia care resources, assistance, and support for citizens across the state of North Dakota. Through a competitive procurement process, the Alzheimer's Association was awarded a contract to provide the services.

The initial contract award was in the amount of \$962,085 and covered a period of 18 months (January 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011).

The Alzheimer's Association has provided monthly reports demonstrating staff service delivery, continued progress in providing assistance to caregivers, and documentation of successful outcomes.

The Alzheimer's Association subcontracts with the University of North Dakota (UND) Center for Rural Health to study and report outcomes of the Dementia Care Services Program, including the estimated long-term care and health care costs avoided, and the improvement in disease management and caregiver assistance.

The goal of the program is to inform people with dementia and their caregivers about dementia care issues, which, in turn, may lead to decreased depression, increased family support, delays in nursing home

placement, and a reduction of inappropriate use of health services. To achieve this, staff provide care consultation services to people with the disease and their caregivers, including needs assessment, care plan development, resource referral, emotional support, dementia education, and follow-up as needed. These services are provided by telephone, e-mail, or in person through individual and family meetings.

The program also provides education for communities, professionals, and law enforcement agencies regarding the symptoms of dementia, the benefits of early detection and treatment, and the services available to individuals with dementia and their caregivers.

During this time period, the Dementia Care Services Program worked with 717 caregivers, providing 1,456 contacts for 454 people with dementia. Families received services in each of the eight regional human service areas, all of the counties, and all of the legislative districts. Forty-seven percent of people served with dementia live in rural North Dakota.

The UND Center for Rural Health evaluation concludes that providing enhanced support to people with dementia and their caregivers contributes to potential long-term care cost savings and to a reduction in health care costs. Caregivers also show an increase in the completion of important dementia care action steps such as the establishment of a power of attorney, instituting a health care directive, and acquiring long-term care insurance.

I would now like to turn to Jan Mueller, Alzheimer's Association Field Director, for continued remarks on the Dementia Care Services Program.

I am available for any questions you may have.