

Improving Dementia Care in Senior Care Options (SCO)

H.614/S.367



Sponsors: Representative Danielle Gregoire, Senator Jason Lewis

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias pose significant challenges for both the person living with the disease and their family caregivers. Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in America and caring for people with Alzheimer's and other comorbidities (i.e. chronic diseases) demonstrates both a difficult and costly health care challenge. If caregivers are not promptly connected with quality care and support services, their ability to successfully manage the dementia of their loved ones as well as other chronic illnesses will be compromised.

One in 10 people age 65 and older (10 percent) has Alzheimer's dementia. The MassHealth Senior Care Options (SCO) program is a comprehensive health plan that covers all of the services reimbursable under Medicare and MassHealth through a senior care organization and its network of providers. The SCO program offers MassHealth Standard members aged 65 or older quality health care that combines health services with social support services. In Massachusetts there are six SCO providers and many of their members are struggling with cognitive impairment/dementia. Massachusetts Senior Care Option (SCO) plans provide health care coverage for 54,000 low income seniors.

Dementia Care Coordination (DCC) is a evidence-informed, proactive care consultation service providing vital support to families caring for a loved one with dementia. Pioneered by the Alzheimer's Association of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, this innovative service is initiated by a referral from a clinical provider and results in a family care consultation with a trained dementia expert, an individualized care plan and connection to a range of family caregiver support services.

Quality support for family caregivers makes a significant difference in the ability to manage both the dementia and other chronic diseases of loved ones. Published studies have shown that interventions such as DCC not only improve the quality of life for people with dementia, but are also cost effective; reducing unnecessary re-hospitalizations and emergency department visits, improving the management of other chronic illnesses and reducing premature nursing home placement.

This legislation requires that all Massachusetts Senior Care Options plans provide Dementia Care Coordination (DCC) to SCO members that have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.



**HOSPITALS
(2015)**

22.5%

dementia patient
hospital readmission
rate



MEDICAID

\$1.696 BILLION

MA Medicaid costs of
caring for people with
Alzheimer's (2018)



MEDICARE

\$28,996

MA per capita Medicare
spending on people
with dementia (2018)



Published studies show that interventions like DCC reduce hospitalizations, decrease ED visits, and delay nursing home admission.

**PLEASE SUPPORT
H.614/S.367**

An Act to Improve Alzheimer's & Dementia Care in Senior Care Options (SCO) programs

For more information, please contact:

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