

1 H.785

2 Introduced by Representatives Casey of Montpelier, Galfetti of Barre Town,

3 Headrick of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Minier

4 of South Burlington, Morrissey of Bennington, and Sweeney of

5 Shelburne

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: Human services; appropriations; dementia respite grant program;

9 dementia capable activities

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to appropriate

11 funds for the dementia respite grant program and to establish a pilot program

12 that creates or expands dementia capable activities in certain counties.

13 An act relating to dementia respite and dementia capable programming

14 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

15 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

16 The General Assembly finds that:

17 (1) according to the Alzheimer Association's 2025 Vermont

18 Alzheimer's Statistics, there are:

19 (A) 12,800 Vermonters over 65 years of age with Alzheimer's

20 Disease; and

1 (B) 20,000 unpaid caregivers in Vermont providing a combined total
2 of 29 million hours of care annually, which totals \$773,000,000.00 in unpaid
3 care, 61.5 percent of whom have chronic health conditions themselves and
4 35.4 percent of whom have depression;

5 (2) according to the Department of Health, one in four caregivers spend
6 40 or more hours per week on dementia-related caregiving responsibilities;

7 (3) according to the Alzheimer's Association's 2021 Behavioral Risk
8 Factor Surveillance System, 71.1 percent of Vermont's dementia caregivers are
9 women, 23.6 percent of Vermont's dementia caregivers are also caring for a
10 child, and 52.8 percent of Vermont's dementia caregivers have been providing
11 care for two or more years;

12 (4) according to the Alzheimer's Association, 57 percent of employed
13 dementia caregivers had to go into work late, leave early, or take time off due
14 to caregiving demands;

15 (5) according to the Alzheimer's Association, the total lifetime cost of
16 care for a person living with dementia is approximately \$405,262.00; and

17 (6) Vermont's Dementia Respite Grant is distributed by the Department
18 of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living to the five area agencies on
19 aging to support unpaid family caregivers and may be used for services such as
20 in-home care and adult day services, but is not available to individuals
21 receiving Choices for Care or receiving caregiver support through the Veterans

1 Independence, Attendant Services, or National Family Caregiver Support
2 programs.

3 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION; DEMENTIA RESPITE GRANT PROGRAM

4 (a) In fiscal year 2027, \$750,000.00 shall be appropriated from the General
5 Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for
6 distribution to the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging to fund the
7 Vermont Dementia Respite Grant.

8 (b) Twenty percent of the grant shall be used to fund “out-of-home day”
9 respite care, including adult day programs, meaning care provided in a group
10 setting outside the home during daytime hours.

11 (c) Individuals with dementia with an annual income at or below 400
12 percent of the federal poverty level shall be eligible for grant funds under this
13 section. Funds shall be capped at \$3,000.00 per person for fiscal year 2027.

14 (d) Each area agency on aging shall maintain a waitlist for services funded
15 through this grant program. Funding shall be available on a first-come, first-
16 served basis.

17 Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION; DEMENTIA CAPABLE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

18 (a) In fiscal year 2027, \$100,000.00 shall be appropriated from the General
19 Fund to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living to
20 establish a one-year pilot program to create or expand dementia capable social
21 activities in Rutland and Washington Counties. The grant shall be

1 administered by the Department's State Dementia Services Coordinator, in
2 consultation with the Commission on Alzheimer's Disease and Related
3 Disorders established pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 3085b.

4 (b) The State Dementia Services Coordinator shall award four grants of
5 \$25,000.00 to community organizations in Rutland and Washington Counties,
6 such as senior centers, libraries, recreation departments, and meal sites,
7 providing dementia capable social activities. The State Dementia Services
8 Coordinator shall prioritize activities serving individuals with cognitive
9 impairment or dementia and that support brain health. Successful grant
10 applicants shall have completed training in communicating with and
11 developing activities for individuals with dementia and other cognitive
12 disorders.

13 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.