

My name is Meg Polyte, I am the Policy Director for the Vermont Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and a member of the Long Term Care Crisis Coalition. I'm here to ask you invest in home and community based care that so many Vermonters rely on to "[grow old with dignity, respect and independence.](#)"

The [Long Term Care Crisis Coalition](#) represents more than 200 providers and organizations who deliver nursing home level of care in homes and communities. We are united as a sector responsible for caring for some of Vermont's sickest and most vulnerable. Vermonters with Alzheimer's and all other dementia represent a large portion of those who are served through this network.

Almost 13,000 Vermonters over the age of 65 are diagnosed with Alzheimer's. That number grows when you add in all other forms of dementia and those who are undiagnosed. [2024 VT Alzheimer's Facts and Figures](#)

Vermont has the third-oldest population in the nation and the largest percentage of older people living in rural areas. [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Home and community based services are an integral part of our health system and are much less costly than hospitalization, but without funding they are shrinking and closing at a time when demand is growing.

[The Department of Health reports approximately 38% of ADRD hospitalizations are preventable.](#)

Investing in home and community based services is vital if we want to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, and our overall health care spending.

I was shocked that the Governor's proposed FY26 budget did not include any increase in funding for long term care providers and communities that accept Medicaid to care for our most vulnerable Vermonters as they age. We are seeing price increases in all aspects of life, so this represents a funding cut to a key part of our health care system.

I am asking you to:

1. Fully implement the increases for home-based Choices for Care services and Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) as outlined in the [February 15, 2023 DVHA rate study](#) (~\$6 million in General Fund dollars)
2. Include an inflationary adjustment of 4% to all long-term care reimbursement rates in the FY26 budget.
3. Ensure the sustainability of Adult Day programs by funding their budget request.

We have amazing organizations with folks on the ground serving Vermonters as they age. We don't need to reinvent the wheel; we need to adequately fund what is already working.

Thank you,
Megan Polyte, Policy Director
Alzheimer's Association, Vermont Chapter
mpolyte@alz.org