

By Senator Wise

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing the devastating and far-reaching effects of Alzheimer's disease, honoring the caregivers and health care providers of those who have the disease, and encouraging participation in National Memory Screening Day.

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is a slow, progressive disorder of the brain that results in loss of memory and other cognitive function and, eventually, death, and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and currently affects an estimated 2.4 million to 4.5 million Americans, and

WHEREAS, in Florida, alone, it is estimated that more than 500,000 people have Alzheimer's disease, and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with the disease results in a delay of diagnosis, in some cases up to 6 years, and

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease takes an enormous toll on family members, with an estimated one in four acting as caregivers for each individual with the disease, and

WHEREAS, caregivers for individuals with Alzheimer's disease suffer more stress, depression, and health problems than caregivers of people with other illnesses, and

WHEREAS, recent advancements in scientific research have demonstrated the benefits of early medical treatment for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, as well as the benefits of early access to counseling and other support services for their caregivers, and

WHEREAS, with early diagnosis, individuals can avoid or

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30 correct contributing medical problems, commence available
31 therapy, organize current and future care, and enhance self-
32 determination, and caregivers can identify and embrace community
33 support services, and

34 WHEREAS, in direct response to research breakthroughs,
35 National Memory Screening Day was established by the Alzheimer's
36 Foundation of America (AFA) as a collaborative effort with local
37 organizations and health care professionals across the county to
38 promote awareness, early detection, and early diagnosis of
39 memory impairment so that individuals can obtain proper medical
40 treatment, social services, and other resources related to their
41 condition, and

42 WHEREAS, National Memory Screening Day is held by the AFA
43 each third Tuesday in November in recognition of National
44 Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and, on this day, health
45 care professionals administer free, confidential, face-to-face
46 memory screenings at thousands of sites throughout the United
47 States, and

48 WHEREAS, memory screening is not used to diagnose any
49 illness, but is used as an indicator to determine whether a
50 person might benefit from further examination by a qualified
51 health care provider, and

52 WHEREAS, memory screenings are a safe and cost-effective
53 intervention to direct at-risk individuals to appropriate
54 clinical resources, thus reducing the costs of long-term care or
55 hospitalization resulting from undiagnosed complications, and

56 WHEREAS, screenings also greatly benefit those with normal
57 scores by checking their memory, allaying fears, and promoting
58 chronic disease prevention and successful aging, NOW, THEREFORE,

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60 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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62 That the Senate recognizes the seriousness of Alzheimer's
63 disease and the toll it takes on individuals with the disease
64 and their caregivers;

65 Acknowledges that more outreach and education is needed to
66 eliminate the stigma associated with the disease and assist
67 individuals and their caregivers in identifying available
68 screenings, treatments, and support;

69 Encourages all Americans with memory concerns or who want
70 to check their memory to have annual memory screenings at
71 National Memory Screening Day sites or by other qualified
72 professionals;

73 Congratulates state and local organizations representing
74 individuals with memory problems, caregivers, and health care
75 professionals for their commitment to improve the quality of
76 life of individuals and families confronting dementia by
77 providing optimal care and services; and

78 Supports the goals and ideals of National Alzheimer's
79 Disease Awareness Month and National Memory Screening Day,
80 including the development of a state health policy on dementia
81 screening and care.