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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 25TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Mental Health Reform
Assembly Bill 783 Testimony
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First of all, I would like to thank you, Vice-Chair Jagler and committee members, for allowing me to testify before you today on Assembly Bill 783.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in America and the only one in the top ten that cannot be prevented, treated or cured.

According to Dr. Ronald Peterson from the Mayo Clinic, about 115,000 in Wisconsin are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. That translates to about five million people nationally and 30 million people worldwide, according to Dr. Peterson.

Alzheimer's and Dementia also affect family members and caregivers, who are often the same person. As one who comes from a family in which Alzheimer's has been a major issue, I can't begin to tell you how difficult it is to see loved ones suffering and struggling with it."

AB 783 provides funding for the Department of Health Services to raise awareness about Alzheimer's and Dementia. The bill will make it possible for people take a virtual dementia tour at various locations throughout the state. That tour involves putting on goggles and performing simple tasks as requested at various points during the tour. Experiencing the struggle and frustration associated with doing routine things is eye-opening.

As people throughout the state go through that experience, awareness and concern about Alzheimer's and Dementia as it relates to those diagnosed with it, family members, caregivers and others, will be significantly improved.

Because of my mother's Alzheimer's, I was somewhat familiar with it. However, when I took a virtual tour, I came away with a much better understanding of what she had experienced.

This bill will help a significant number of people throughout our state, and I hope you will support it.

Thank you for hearing this bill today. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.