



8 February 2012

Senator Bill Wielechowski
Chairman, Senate State Affairs Committee
State Capitol Room 101
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Senator Wielechowski:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, I am pleased to extend our support for Senate Bill 179, sponsored by Senator Bettye Davis, which would address the need for a prompt response system when a vulnerable adult has gone missing. The Association supports creating a system that provides for dissemination of relevant information about missing individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia to appropriate law enforcement personnel.

An estimated six out of ten people with Alzheimer's disease will wander from their homes or caregiving facilities at some point during the disease process. Most people with dementia who wander are found within 1.5 miles of home, and 50 percent of individuals who wander risk serious injury or death if not found within the first 24 hours. Environmental dangers pose serious threats to people with Alzheimer's who are particularly vulnerable to succumb to natural elements such as weather, and who may lose their ability to remember when to eat or drink. An immediate response with emphasis on local searching is imperative once an individual with dementia is reported missing.

The Alzheimer's Association supports a comprehensive approach to constructing a notification, or "silver alert", system that addresses the needs of persons with dementia and their families. This approach includes first responder dementia training and coordinating search efforts between families, caregivers and local authorities. The system should be interoperable with existing programs, such as the MedicAlert and Safe Return program, which is a nationwide identification, support and enrollment program providing assistance to adult wanderers and their families.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue and applaud Senator Davis for spearheading this effort.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "RChapman", written in a cursive style.

Randi Chapman
Director, State Affairs
Alzheimer's Association

Cc: Senator Bettye Davis