

To Whom It May Concern,

Respite care funding is a critical component of a sustainable county health and human services system. For families caring for individuals with early-onset Alzheimer's disease, access to reliable respite care directly supports caregiver stability, workforce participation, and the ability for individuals to remain safely at home.

My husband has early-onset Alzheimer's disease. I am his primary caregiver while also managing our household and working full-time. I coordinate all aspects of his care, including medical management, daily supervision, and emotional support. Without structured respite services, maintaining this level of care alongside full-time employment would not be possible.

Through Montgomery ARC, I currently receive limited respite hours that allow my husband to participate in four hours of weekly, structured social engagement with other individuals living with young-onset Alzheimer's. His neurologist has emphasized that regular peer-based social interaction is of utmost importance for preserving cognitive function, emotional health, and quality of life.

These respite hours serve two essential purposes:

- They provide medically meaningful social engagement for my husband.
- They allow me to continue working, managing our household, and maintaining my own health—reducing the risk of caregiver burnout and crisis.

Adequate funding for respite care helps prevent costly downstream outcomes, including caregiver health decline, emergency interventions, and premature institutional placement. In contrast, modest investments in respite services support family caregivers, extend the ability of individuals to remain at home, and reduce long-term public expenditures.

Families affected by early-onset Alzheimer's often fall outside traditional aging-services models, yet their needs are intensive and long-term. Targeted respite programs fill this gap and are essential to maintaining family stability. I urge the County Council to continue and strengthen funding for respite care programs. These services are not optional supports—they are foundational to caregiver sustainability, public health outcomes, and responsible stewardship of county resources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Stone

