

### **R24-3 Resolution on Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias**

RESOLVED, that the Bishop appoint a Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias for God's People, five (5) of whom shall be from the clergy order; four (4) of whom shall be from the lay order: one (1) whom shall be recommended from Safeguarding God's People; one(1) whom shall be recommended by the Center for Racial Healing; one (1) whom shall be recommended by the Hispanic Ministries of the Diocese; one (1) whom shall be recommended by the LGBTQ+ Ministries and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall undertake a comprehensive research initiative to explore what role the church can play in mitigating the effects of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias, given the concerning rise in affected individuals and their caregivers. This research will encompass identifying relevant resources and examining their potential applications within the Diocese, with a particular focus on serving Episcopalians of color, LGBTQ+ Episcopalians, and those residing in senior or assisted living communities. The Task Force will then develop and present proposals outlining how the Diocese can effectively support and enhance the overall well-being and wellness of church members affected by these conditions, ensuring a compassionate and inclusive approach to addressing this growing health concern within the church community; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Task Force report its findings and recommendations to the 119th Annual Council.

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Explanation**

As our population ages – both in the Episcopal Church and in the United States, the incidence of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias has rapidly increased. Currently, nearly 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's (Attachment 1). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state the growth in Alzheimer's cases is expected to disproportionately affect minority communities:

- African Americans: Projected to see a fourfold increase by 2060
- Hispanic Americans: Expected to experience a sevenfold increase by 2060

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated feelings of isolation from the Church for many individuals, particularly those who were already vulnerable or marginalized, this isolation continues to be a significant issue, especially for those who suffer from Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias. Research has also highlighted the elevated risk of cognitive decline among LGBTQ+ individuals. A study by the University of California, San Francisco (Attachment 3) found that LGBTQ+ Americans were 29% more likely to report early signs of dementia, such as memory loss and confusion, compared to their straight, cisgender counterparts.

The role of God's Church in this brain health crisis is clear: comfort the afflicted and the desperate. This resolution seeks to establish a task force within the diocese who will research and report on how the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta can facilitate an Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias initiative to support our congregations, incorporating spiritual and communal perspectives. Input from clergy, laypersons, and diverse identities across the spectrum of the Church.