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Department of Elder Affairs Announces First Dementia Caring Community in Florida

~ Leon County and the City of Tallahassee commit to help local residents affected by dementia

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Sam Verghese today announced Leon County and the City of Tallahassee as the first Dementia Caring Community in Florida through the Department’s Dementia Care and Cure Initiative.

At a press conference at the Tallahassee Senior Center, Verghese highlighted the need for the initiative and the goals of the new partnership. “Florida has the second highest incidence of Alzheimer’s disease in the nation, and even more are affected by other forms of dementia. Across the state, we will be taking action at the community level to support those diagnosed with dementia, their families, and caregivers,” Verghese said.

There are more than 510,000 Floridians who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease – the most well-known and common type of dementia. Latest numbers from the Alzheimer’s Association show there are more than 1.1 million caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias. As the physical and financial costs of caregiving increase, Florida seeks to lead the nation in response and work with communities to be more dementia friendly.

"To be the first Dementia Caring Community in Florida highlights all the great work we've done in Leon County, and it also challenges us to do even more to help our seniors," said Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge. "From Choose Tallahassee, to our Chamber of Commerce, to the first responder chiefs, and the Leon County Sheriff’s Office, Leon County is a senior-friendly community – today's announcement highlighted that."

“Being the first Dementia Caring Community in Florida demonstrates the City and County’s commitment to working together to address some of the major challenges faced by Tallahassee’s aging population,” Tallahassee City Commissioner Gil Ziffer said. “We are fortunate to live in a community that cares about and understands the importance of providing the very best care possible for residents suffering from dementia, their caregivers and their loved ones.”

“I am hopeful about our new partnership with the City of Tallahassee and Leon County as we tackle such an important issue and work together to find innovative solutions to make a difference in the lives of those affected by dementia,” said Secretary Verghese.

The Department of Elder Affairs will work with representatives from the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, as well as other community representatives who will make up the local Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Advisory Council, to develop a community work plan and recommend first steps for action in the local community.

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The Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, serves seniors as they live, contribute, and build legacies in Florida. For more information, please visit elderaffairs.org