

February 22, 2023

Testimony of Drs. David Burnes (University of Toronto) and Stuart Lewis (Dartmouth) on behalf of the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine

To Joint Standing Committee On Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

In favor of LD 258: An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government.

Greetings Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

We are providing written testimony related to the Elder Service Connections program, which is included in Governor Mill's biennial budget, LD 258.

The Elder Service Connections program is employing a community-based response intervention, RISE, in partnership with Maine Adult Protective Services (APS) that responds to and supports cases of elder abuse and self-neglect (EASN). Along with colleagues, we co-developed the RISE intervention model and have been working closely with the Elder Service Connections program and Maine Adult Protective Services to both implement and evaluate RISE.

RISE was developed based on extensive consultations in Maine with EASN stakeholders, including APS caseworkers and supervisors, as well as members who represent other sectors that intersect with EASN cases. Rooted in ecological systems, client-centered, and relational conceptual frameworks, RISE integrates core intervention components that have demonstrated evidence in other domains of family violence and/or promising results in the context of EASN.<sup>1</sup>

Our evaluation research on RISE in Maine to date has demonstrated evidence to support RISE in working with EASN cases. RISE has shown strong feasibility; 94% of cases referred to RISE accept services and among these cases only 4.5% drop out. These are outstanding feasibility results in the context of EASN interventions. RISE has also demonstrated strong program satisfaction from the perspective of clients. Among active clients who have been served by the Elder Service Connections program using RISE, nearly 80% reported that the program had met

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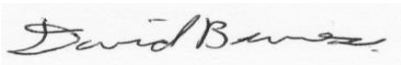
<sup>1</sup> Burnes, D., Connolly, MT., Salvo, E. Kimball, P., Rogers, G., & Lewis, S. (2022). RISE: An integrated model of elder abuse intervention. *The Gerontologist*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnac083>

most or almost all of their needs, and 90% reported being mostly or very satisfied with program services. Finally, in regard to program outcomes, adjusting for the fact that cases referred to RISE are more complex/severe than other APS (non-referred) cases, cases exposed to RISE showed a significantly lower likelihood of re-referral (recidivism) back into the APS system compared to APS cases that did not receive RISE.<sup>2</sup>

A reduction in case recurrence carries important workflow and resource implications for APS. For example, based on these findings, if all clients served during the two-year study period had been part of RISE, there would have been an estimated 106 fewer repeat investigations opened. With an average of 28.5 days per APS investigation, this would have meant more than 8 years of extra APS caseworker time would have been available for other needed work. A reduction in recurrence alleviates caseworker caseloads and allows APS to intake new cases and/or focus on those active cases requiring elevated levels of attention. The reduction in re-investigations during the study period suggests that the protective effects of RISE may be sustainable. Finally, in examining the RISE/APS partnership, APS caseworkers routinely expressed that RISE helped address an important service system gap in addressing client needs and providing services that are beyond the scope of APS.<sup>3</sup>

With the above findings in mind, RISE has now emerged as an evidenced-based EASN intervention program. Further, the state of Maine has emerged as a national leader in EASN prevention and intervention work.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.



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<sup>2</sup> Lewis, S. Connolly, MT., Salvo, E. Kimball, P., Rogers, G., MacNeil, A., & **Burnes, D.** (2023, under review). The effect of a community-based elder abuse and self-neglect intervention on repeat investigations by Adult Protective Services: The RISE Project. *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*.

<sup>3</sup> Burnes, D., MacNeil, A., Connolly, MT., Salvo, E. Kimball, P., Rogers, G., & Lewis, S. (2022). Qualitative evaluation of the “RISE” elder abuse intervention model in partnership with Adult Protective Services: Addressing a service system gap. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 45, 329-348. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08946566.2022.2140321>

