



Central Maine Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center
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Written Testimony of Nathan Miller, LMSW, Vice President of Aging and Disability Services, Spectrum Generations (the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging).

To the Committee on APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS 131st Maine Legislature neither for or against 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 for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025"

Delivered Electronically May 18, 2023 after verbal, in-person, testimony May 17, 2023.

This testimony is to urge the committee to amend LD 258 to (or to do so by other means) appropriate funding for older Maine residents as outlined in LD 1684 – "An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by Expanding Coordinated Community Programming."

LD 1684's fiscal note is smaller compared to other line items in the change package but would still represent a large impact and a return on investment. LD 1684 was voted OTP by the Committee on Health and Human Services with significant and incredibly positive bi-partisan support.

Maine's social welfare system can be complex and difficult to navigate. It can be particularly difficult for older adults with diminishing capacity to access public benefits and services. This can lead to negative outcomes like homelessness or avoidable hospitalization and institutionalization.

As a Licensed Master of Social Work, providing community services for older adults for nearly 2 decades, I can tell you this service is needed, and the need is growing. Throughout my career it has been the present and persistent need. Something that would not only help individual outcomes, but also improve the efficiency of our safety net for older adults.

Numerous older adults are currently in need of Case Management services to include, but not limited to comprehensive assessment, person-centered service plans, and ongoing service monitoring. However, these individuals are unable to receive Case Management support because they do not have the behavioral health, Intellectual or developmental disabilities that qualify for Case Management services under current guidelines and policies.

Maine's Area Agencies on Aging are best known for Meals on Wheels, but also provide services under Title III B, C, D, and E of the Older Americans Act. One of the services within this scope is Case Management for older adults, but there is no dedicated funding for this service. As a result, older adults are falling through the cracks of a complicated social welfare system.

Recently, Spectrum Generations wrote a grant with the support of Legal Services for the Elderly (LSE) to provide Case Management services to older clients that are burdened by eviction cases. In Central Maine alone, over the last year, there were about 100 eviction cases for older adults. LSE estimates Case Management services could have made the difference in 30-50% of these cases – aiding people to remain in their homes of choice and age with dignity, as we all hope to do.

Maine's AAA's provide a plethora of supportive services, information, referral, and general assistance through Aging and Disability Resource Centers. The demand for services is so great that the methodology of providing services is 'catch and release' in which assistance is provided without ongoing follow-up and support. Funding for this bill will ensure that ongoing service monitoring is available to those that need it the most. This service would not conflict with current activities of the ADRC, and it would not conflict with, or duplicate, current Case Management or Care Coordination models. Taking this step can only further enhance service capabilities for the betterment of our older community members.

Systemic reviews show that for older adults with chronic conditions, Case Management has a positive impact on institutionalization delay and nursing home admission rates.ⁱ Study reviews also show that Case Management is one of the most important services to support caregivers of people with dementia, and that it is an important factor in delaying institutionalization.ⁱⁱ To ensure positive outcomes, we need to ensure older adults have access to navigational support for medical care and Long Term Services and Supports.ⁱⁱⁱ

This funding would build a state-wide, standardized infrastructure of best practices to support older adults to remain in their communities of choice. It would help older adults navigate social and health services based in communities to avoid institutionalization and unnecessary hospitalization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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ⁱ Pimouguet, C., Lavaud, T., Dartigues, J.F. et al. Dementia case management effectiveness on health care costs and resource utilization: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *J Nutr Health Aging* 14, 669–676 (2010). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12603-010-0314-4>

ⁱⁱ Chu, Paul & Edwards, Joy & Levin, Ron & Thomson, Jim. (2000). The use of clinical case management for early stage Alzheimer' patients and their families. *American Journal of Alzheimers Disease and Other Dementias - AM J ALZHEIMERS DIS OTHER DEM.* 15. 284-290. 10.1177/153331750001500506.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lines, L. M., Ahaghotu, C., Tilly, J., Wiener, J. M. (2013). Care coordination for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias: literature review. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Policy Contract #HHSP23320100021WI. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/76771/AlzCC.pdf>