



*Testimony in Support of LD 2125*

*An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Advisory Council Within the Department of Health and Human Services and to Require a State Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*

*January 24, 2024*

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Denise Vachon and I am the Government Affairs advocate for the Maine-based provider members of LeadingAge ME&NH as well as their residents and families - and today, especially those living with Alzheimer's Disease or other dementias.

LeadingAge Maine New Hampshire is proud to represent Maine-based not-for-profit providers of senior living and independent housing (market rate and below-market rate), assisted living and resident care (market rate and PNMI members), memory care providers, nursing care providers and home-based service options serving older adults and people with disabilities.

Our provider members work every day to serve and support the residents under their rooves and in their care, as well as to be resources for the families of those residents, regardless of their situations. Fortunately, not everyone who lives in one or another of our communities experiences Alzheimer's Disease or other dementia. Still, many do. The challenges to the individual experiencing dementia are significant as they absorb the news of a new diagnosis or condition. The approaches to service and support - from both the provider and the families - change as cognitive challenges advance.

This journey is not an easy one for anyone in the circle of dementia. The resources are limited. It's a hard system of supports to navigate, and those supports are limited. We know that heightened awareness of symptoms brings more and more people to diagnosis, then seeking treatments, strategies for safe living, and community resources as they find their way -- hopefully as early as possible in their journey, and then for the long haul.

Our senior living, assisted living and long term care providers see the struggle every day, and work to support everyone in the circle of dementia. We are encouraged by this legislation making way for a State Plan to address Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. LeadingAge ME&NH supports this legislation and looks forward to serving in a State where the multi-dimensional hurdles of these dementias can be lessened and where the human impacts for all concerned can be mitigated.

LeadingAge ME NH is ready to support the execution of a State Plan in any way we can. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. We urge your support LD 2125.

*Denise M Vachon, MLA, BSW Government Affairs, LeadingAge Maine and New Hampshire*