

Nancy Koglmeier
The Southern Maine Agency on Aging
LD 814

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Falmouth
The Southern Maine Agency on Aging
Cumberland County

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Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Koglmeier. I live in Falmouth. Thank you for the work you all do serving the residents of Maine.

I am a Board member of The Southern Maine Agency on Aging, or for short, S.M.A.A., serving the residents of Cumberland and York Counties. Since joining the Board I have seen the impact of our services on a variety of fronts, but most directly with caregivers of individuals who are experiencing cognitive decline, who bring their loved ones to S.M.A.A. Sam L Cohen Adult Day Center in Biddeford. Please note, as I share this testimony, not all 5 of Maine's AAAs have an Adult Day program and they are generally not state funded. That said, I thought it important to speak about this area today to demonstrate the scope and impact of the work of the AAA's but also to point out the critical role volunteers play in their program delivery.

More specifically, last Spring, as a volunteer and per the request of the paid staff, I led qualitative research among caregivers who bring their loved ones to the Cohen Center. The objective of this research was to gather feedback from the caregivers about what was working, what could be improved, and what additional services might be provided to enhance the support they were receiving from the Center.

This research deepened my appreciation for, and commitment to, the work of the AAA's in Maine and across the country. In the case of these caregivers the work of The Cohen Center is life changing for both the caregivers and their loved ones.

As an example and changing names for confidentiality, let's talk about caregiver Sally. Sally has a husband, George, who she brings to the Cohen Center. She's in her 60's, he is in his 70's. He has been coming for five years. During the research she indicated having this resource has been critical for her ability to hold their lives together, given his total dependency. She cannot leave him home alone for any period of time. They do not have any children who live close by so she is the primary and sole caregiver. She is an artist by profession but has had to stop working because she has no capacity to do so. She struggles with her own health issues as well.

Another quote from John, who brings his wife, Mary, to The Cohen Center.

““The people here [at the Cohen Center] have been very good. If she wasn't here she would be in a home because I couldn't do itSo I am very thankful for this place. I can't say enough good things about it.”

FYI, The Cohen Center is staffed both by paid staff and committed, trained and kind-hearted volunteers, roughly split 50/50. Like SMAA run Cohen Center, all of the AAA programs need and utilize trained volunteers to deliver their mission. In a nutshell, the volunteers enable us to expand our services without incurring extra costs. Passing LD 814 would increase the capacity of the AAA's to recruit and train more volunteers to deliver more services where they are needed in a cost effective, efficient and timely manner.

Thank you for listening and seeking to understand the huge value delivered by the AAA's in Maine and the huge value that additional funding could provide.