



**Testimony of Gerard Queally, President and CEO of Spectrum Generations,  
the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging**

**To Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services 132<sup>nd</sup>  
Maine Legislature, First Regular Session**

**In Favor of LD 979: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113:  
Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive  
Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services**

**April 1, 2025**

Honorable Senate Chair Henry Ingwersen and Honorable House Chair Michelle Meyer and all other Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services Committee,

I am Gerard Queally, a resident of Brunswick, Maine and the President and CEO of Spectrum Generations, the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging.

I am writing to express my support for LD 979, *Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services.*

This bill was brought to my attention by Legal Services for Maine Elders, which has been working closely with the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the AARP, and the Alzheimer's Association of Maine to advocate for a much-overdue revision of the outdated regulations governing Maine's assisted living industry.

While Spectrum Generations does not provide housing services, our mission is to advance the well-being and independence of older and disabled adults, with the support of their care partners, to live in the community of their choice. We know all too well that there may come a point where that person can no longer remain safely in their own home, and a common concern expressed by their care partners is the lack of safe, affordable, quality housing for their loved ones, especially those with Alzheimer's and dementia. Because of that, we stand with our colleagues to magnify the voice of older adults asking for your support of LD 979.

The majority of Chapter 113 has not been revised since August 2008, even though, in those 17 years, the world has changed, as have the needs of Mainers residing in

assisted living facilities. More than half of the residents in some facilities have dementia, which is more than in nursing homes, and many have co-occurring health conditions, which require a greater degree of care.

We have all been affected in some way by the current workforce shortage; the assisted housing industry is no exception. Without enough trained staff, residents may go without help for hours — leading to dangerous falls, untreated infections, and even life-threatening conditions. This is unacceptable. Higher staffing levels will mean safer, more attentive care for these medically fragile residents and better working conditions for staff.

Maine's demographic trends underscore the urgency of this issue. Maine is the "oldest" state in the nation, with a rapidly growing older adult population. By 2040, 30% of Maine's population projects to be sixty-five and older, compared to 20% nationwide.

Recent data shows substantial growth in older age groups, with a 22.8% increase in the 75 to 79 age range and a 16.5% rise in those aged 80 to 84 from 2020 to 2023.

I appreciate the long, thoughtful revision process for this rule that considered the feedback of more than 500 Mainers and that gives facilities until mid-2027 to meet the proposed staffing levels. If we do not approve LD 979, we leave vulnerable older adults at risk. These are our parents, grandparents, our neighbors...and they deserve our protection.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gerard Queally  
President & CEO  
Spectrum Generations