



Testimony of Kristin Overton, member, MACSP Board of Directors

Executive Director, SKILLS Inc.

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

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

January 24, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you in support of LD 2125..

My name is Kristin Overton. I am the Executive Director of SKILLS, Inc and we've been supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 60 years. I've also spent 16 years working with older adults while working for Spectrum Generations and Bridges Home Services. In those 16 years, I saw countless families struggle with assisting loved ones with dementia and Alzheimer's, including my own and that of my husband's.

I serve on the Board of Directors and Chair the Community Supports Committee of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP). MACSP is the statewide association of more than 90 individual, mission driven agencies providing person centered and individualized educational, vocational, residential and community supports, as well as specialized services and care to several thousand of Maine's children and adults who have either intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or brain injuries, so that they may live full and meaningful lives in the community.

On behalf of our MACSP members, I want to thank Representative Craven for introducing this bill.

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience an earlier and more swift onset of dementia and experience it at higher instances than their similar-aged cohort. **A National Institute of Health publication notes that incidences of dementia may be experienced at rates of up to five times higher than older adults in the general population.** Dementia onset is experienced much earlier and much more rapidly in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those with down syndrome often experience onset in their 50's.

Providers, family members, and guardians are often not prepared for the rapid decline and more often than not, an individual with dementia needs to be supported in a nursing home or memory care facility rather than being afforded the ability to age in place in the home that they are familiar with.

Unfortunately most memory care centers are not trained to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Very little support is available to those with IDD and dementia/ Alzheimers'

as the current service structure is built for either people with IDD/ Autism or for people with dementia related conditions. Many people with IDD live at home with aging parents and then experience a significant crisis event when that family member themselves is diagnosed with a dementia related condition. This secondary impact is equally as important to be reviewed.

Looking at ways to enable family members and providers of IDD services to support individuals to age in place and the impacts is necessary and overdue.

We urge your support of the proposed *Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Advisory Council* to investigate the impact, incident rate, delivery system, and resources available or needed in order to be able to better support people with dementia, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities across our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,
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