

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and Distinguished Members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Kim Dufour, RN and I'm the VP of Clinical Services and Quality Assurance for North Country Associates, a Maine based organization which owns and manages 15 nursing facilities across Maine. My thirty one year nursing career has solely been in Long Term Care and the last 19 years has been with North County Associates.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 2214 as it does not provide enough funding for nursing homes and residential care facilities to continue providing care in Maine. Our industry has seen over 23 closures of nursing facilities since 2014, nine of which have occurred in the last three years. The funding shortfall is significant. For nursing homes, the 2022 shortfall is \$96.5 million for nursing homes and \$24 million for residential care facilities. This supplemental budget includes just \$10 million to address this significant gap.

In the last three years, I was a part of four nursing home closures and I can assure you, it doesn't get easier only harder. I have witnessed many emotions from residents, families and employees with the uncertainties when closures are announced. On a few occasions, we were fortunate and able to transfer resident(s) to other local facilities, but that was the exception and not the norm.

I can recall two specific transfers, a husband of a resident visited his wife every day and everyone knew his name and he knew every employee in the building. When the closure of the facility was announced, he was completely devastated and even more so when he found out she was moving over thirty miles away to a different nursing facility. That being said, he continued to visit his wife after she was transferred, but was only able to visit three times a week instead of every day.

I also once had a resident tell me, 'I don't have anybody so you can send me anywhere I will be accepted'. How sad is that, when people are in the last chapter of their lives and then essentially feel like a shelter animal waiting for their forever home acceptance.

With Maine having the oldest median age in the country, more nursing home beds will be needed, not less. LD2214 does not adequately support the most vulnerable people in our state.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee members for the opportunity to speak of my experiences and truly hope you will give consideration for the much needed additional funding this industry needs.

Regards,

Kim Dufour, RN
VP Clinical Services - NCA