

TESTIMONY OF Mary Jane Richards-McDade
Chief Executive Officer
North Country Associates
Public Hearing: Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 at 1:00pm
Department of Health & Human Services

Testimony before the Committee on Health and Human Services

**LD 979, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs
Licensing Rule**

Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer as well as Distinguished Members of the Committee on the Committee of Health and Human Services:

Good Afternoon, my name is Mary Jane Richards-McDade and I am the Chief Executive Officer for North Country Associates. I am here today to give testimony as to why I do not support LD 979 as it is not favorable for our PNMI facility's residents, staff and families.

I do however support changes to the rules when evidence shows the current regulations are not meeting the needs of our residents. I would be eager to collaborate with the Department on modifications to the regulations when evidence shows it is necessary, as I did many years ago when the ICF/IID regulations needed to be reformed. I met with members of DHHS and some providers for a few months. It was a laborious process but in the end resulted in a set of rules both the Department and Providers were comfortable with.

North Country owns and manages 18 facilities and all of them face similar workforce challenges. As you will hear today from many people testifying, mandating higher staffing ratios is going to be a setback for each of our Residential Care and Memory Care Units/Facilities. Many of our centers are multi-level and therefore the additional burden of increased staffing on the Res Care units will inevitably be filled by staff from the Nursing Unit, putting both units in jeopardy of not being able to meet staffing requirements.

I estimate the additional staffing requirements one year from the implementation of the new regulations to cost North Country Associates Millions of Dollars.

I urge you to consider the impact of these revised regulations. Leaving the changes as is will put many facilities in jeopardy of closure. An inevitable fact we should all try to avoid.

Thank you to the Committee for listening to me today. I stand ready to collaborate further on possible solutions with the Licensing and Certification and my colleagues.

Happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mary Jane Richards-McDade, CEO
North Country Associates