

LD 979: Resolve, Regarding Legislation Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Program Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services

Testimony in Support

April 1, 2025

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Committee members. My name is Laura Harper. I am a Senior Associate for Moose Ridge Associates. I am here today to provide testimony in support of this legislation on behalf of Nancy Lever of Lewiston who was employed as an Activity Aide in a memory care unit.

I would like to comment on the proposed rule for Assisted Housing Programs. I have asked Ombudsman Program staff to submit these comments for me. The new rules are a step in the right direction that is long overdue.

I worked in a dementia facility for one year. The staff ratio of 1-12 on days was not enough to provide adequate care for residents with dementia. Housekeeping staff were included to meet ratios though they were not able to provide the care that residents needed.

I witnessed many upsetting situations involving inadequate resident care. Both residents and staff were distressed by these conditions. Staff cared about residents and wanted to provide good care that was impossible without enough staff.

I observed residents who were injured due to resident-to-resident altercation that could have been prevented with enough staff present. Sometimes residents were not fed, beds were soaked with urine, residents who were soiled were not changed. Also, many residents who should been helped to get up were left in bed. Again, due to inadequate staffing.

What I observed was chronic neglect. Again, not because staff didn't want to do the best job possible. They just didn't have enough staff.

I reported this to multiple agencies with no action taken. I urge you to support the new rules that would require more staff. If that happens, it would be an answer to my prayers and for all those who don't have a voice to speak up.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely ,

Nancy Lever
Lewiston, ME.