

February 25, 2016

Testimony submitted for S.B. 165: An Act Expanding Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program

Dear Senator Flexer, Representative Serra and members of The Aging Committee,

I would like to provide testimony on the importance of the Statewide Respite Care Service. I can personally attest why it is essential to expand this service be available to caregivers of people with Dementia and related diseases.

The past 8 years I have witnessed our mom go through the various stages of Dementia, the Alzheimer's type of the disease. The steady decline of our moms daily living skills requires family members to monitor her daily routine. The danger of mom refusing to eat or drink, take her medications on time or falling is a continuous threat to us. Moms health, safety and comfort is very important to minimize illness, confusion and anxiety that could easily escalate into distress for everyone involved.

As time moves on we realize that as caregiver (s) we need time for ourselves to maintain our physical and mental health in addition to caring for our own family nucleus. All of the necessary responsibilities of a caregiver can be overwhelming and depletes our energy to thrive. Small errands such as grocery shopping or going to the bank has to be arranged in advance and become part of a weekly schedule. A doctor appointment for our mom easily takes 5 hours out of the day. Every hour of your day becomes very valuable. Respite care would be invaluable to someone who doesn't have a support system of reliable family and friends.

“Dementia is loss of memory and other mental abilities that affect daily life. Dementia is a series of symptoms that accompany a disease” (NCCDP, LLC. 2014). People with irreversible Dementia's such as: Alzheimer's, Vascular, Lewy Body, Parkinson and Picks disease require long term care in a safe, comfortable environment, preferably in their home. The need for responsible caregivers will increase as the silver wave of Baby boomers approach us.

Please take the progressive step to support the expansion of the Statewide Respite Care Services to people who need a break from their hectic life of caring for someone with Dementia and related diseases.

Respectfully,

Toni Marie Dumaine, Daughter and Advocate for Alzheimer's disease