

*House Health Government and Operations Committee*

*HB 1168: Maryland Department of Health - Residential Service Agencies - Training Requirements*

*POSITION: FAVORABLE*

March 5, 2020

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk,

My name is Carlotta Jackson. I live in New Carrollton. I lost my mother to Alzheimer's disease. I operate an Assisted Living facility, and I am also a Certified Dementia Practitioner. I am here to testify in support of HB 1168 on increasing dementia training standards for staff in Residential Service Agencies (RSAs).

I understand the enormous burden dementia has on Maryland families and the economy. Today, there are 110,000 Maryland residents living with Alzheimer's – the only leading cause of death without a way to prevent, cure or even slow its progression.

I am a small business owner who employs 2 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). **My CNAs receive more than 5 hours and 2 hours continuing education annually for dementia training.** They are also Certified Dementia Practitioners having received 8 hours of in-person training. Topics covered in the training include eating, bathing, dealing with different personalities, wandering or elopement behaviors, and tips to manage various scenarios. **The \$75 yearly cost per CNA to receive dementia training is worth it.** If my CNAs have an understanding of dementia care, our clients will take their loved ones out of our facility. We will lose our business without dementia training.

No two people with dementia are the same. Instead of cookie-cutter approaches, people living with dementia need activities and engagement. Dementia training allows CNAs to alleviate exit-seeking behavior and agitation in people with dementia. For example, one person with the disease wouldn't go to sleep at night. By keeping him active during the day, rerouting his direction, or playing along through immersion in his reality, the CNA used their dementia training to reduce his restlessness.

Most CNAs don't understand the breadth of job requirements, and as a result, CNAs get very stressed out. There is a lot of professional and dementia family caregiver burnout. Dementia training allows CNAs to develop more compassion for people living with dementia. **It also reduces stress on the CNA, and ultimately, leads to better quality of life for the person with the disease.** I hope that my fellow providers recognize this, and that the RSA industry embraces this legislation; as a provider, I can say that all of our workers need this education.