



Testimony in Support of HB 614

Department of Aging – Dementia Care Coordinator

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of Health, Government, and Operations Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. Our union is supporting HB 614 to establish a Dementia Care Coordinator. We ask the Committee to issue a favorable report.

1199 SEIU is part of coalition called Caring Across Maryland. We are a broad coalition of care workers, patients, loved ones, and advocates impacted by our fractured long term care infrastructure and determined to improving it. Our union members are in long term care facilities across the state and we believe in the importance of ensuring that our members are trained to support those with specific needs such as dementia.

However, with the ongoing serious staffing crisis dovetailed with the underinvestment in the long term care system, we see that patient's care teams are overburdened and have gaps. HB 614 aims to fill that gap and make sure no family supporting a loved one with dementia gets left behind.

1199 SEIU also has members in major hospitals across the state and we know that when we support patients with a robust care infrastructure, we can minimize the readmittance of patients in long term care or home care into hospital emergency rooms. As patients with Dementia navigate various healthcare settings, it is vital that designated Dementia Care Coordinator can support them.

HB 614 helps Maryland have a more caring healthcare system for patients with dementia. For the reasons above and more, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

In unity,

Ricarra Jones

Political Director, 1199 SEIU

Ricarra.jones@1199.org