

February 28, 2025

To: Chair Carpenter and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee

This is a Written Only testimony for the SB 88 Hearing on Monday at 1:30

I was the primary caregiver for my father who battled Alzheimer's for almost 8 years. As we battled this disease we worked thru him living at home as long as possible, then moving in with my husband and I, and ultimately, for the last 3 years of his life, placing him in a Memory Care facility. (And also having to move him to a second facility due to care issues.). My father passed away in January, 2021 of Alzheimer's disease.

There were a multitude of challenges in all phases of this journey but one that surprised me was the lack of knowledge and training of those associated with a care facility that was actually sold as Memory Care - and the lack of knowledge and training of those that were in place to help us when there were issues.

When my journey with this disease began I was certainly not very knowledgeable of the options, support and issues that come with dementia related diseases. Most of my knowledge came from hours of research due to a symptom or issue my dad had as we tried to find solutions to what was occurring. Employees at the facilities had taken one or two online courses that were intended to instruct them on everything they needed to know about caring for someone with Alzheimer's. While I understand that we are all learning more about this disease as each year passes, it was frustrating that on frequent occasions I was the person informing the professional care givers of studies, different approaches and issues specific to this disease.

When we first placed dad in a facility there were a number of issues. One issue was they locked the doors and expected the residents to carry a key and open their locked door. This was done to prevent patients from wandering into someone's room. As wandering is a primary symptom of dementia this seemed counter intuitive. Because of this practice we had a middle of the night issue where dad was locked out of his room for hours and ultimately fell. I wanted to see the video feed so we could get a better idea of how he fell and where he might be hurt. I ultimately contacted the Ombudsman for assistance. While they were professional and polite they really didn't have the knowledge to understand what was normal practice for Memory Care facilities. They did inform me that they are only licensed as Assisted living facilities and advised me of my rights. While I did learn things from them I truly don't believe this is understood by most of the population that needs their help. It would be a great resource for the

Ombudsman to be more versed in memory care so they can assist caregivers appropriately. It would also be appropriate for any facility that is labeled as a memory care provider, to also have a level of required training if they plan to advertise their facility as such. It seems this would be in the same vein as anything that is advertised that is specific to an issue - we expect to get what the label advertises we will get - and the Ombudsman is part of the governance that assures this is happening, so they too need a higher level of training and knowledge.

I believe there have been great strides made in the years since I began this journey with my dad, and truly appreciate the attention toward improving the issues that are surrounding Alzheimer's care. Mine is just one story - going to a facility every day gave me a front row seat to many others. Alzheimer's numbers continue to increase and our senior citizens continue to live longer. We owe it to them to make improvements.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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