



Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
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The Honorable Timothy Ginter
Chair, House Aging and Long Term Care Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: HB 265 – Dementia Care Certification

Dear Chairman Ginter:

I write on behalf of the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging as an interested party on HB 265, which would create a dementia care certificate. The Association is supportive of the concept of the Ohio Department of Aging providing the opportunity for dementia care certification for staff in long term care facilities as well as those who provide services in the community, which is the basis for HB 265.

Requiring facilities to accurately portray expertise in dementia care will provide accountability for individuals and their families seeking appropriate care. Providing for a special certification also is an opportunity for professional development and enhancement of career opportunities.

We are facing a dramatic shortage of direct care workers in the home and community-based setting, and understand that similar challenges face nursing facilities as well. For programs administered by the Area Agencies on Aging, low wages, insufficient reimbursement rates and a societal failure in valuing the very hard but critically important work of providing such care are factors that have been at the root of the shortage.

Any requirements that are imposed on individuals providing care, or providers themselves, have to be balanced with the fact that there are considerable challenges right now to meeting the need. We want to avoid the potential unintended consequences of reducing access to services for those who need it most because providers or individuals do not have the resources to meet this new requirement.

Many organizations, including the Area Agencies on Aging, already undergo different types and levels of dementia training depending upon their job duties. Our members manage a network with over 4100 contracts with local partners to deliver direct services, such as meals, transportation, personal care, and home modifications in all regions of the state. Enhancing dementia care through optional certification is a thoughtful and balanced approach that could be applied to our network of services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important bill. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Larke Recchie