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Testimony on SB24 – Alzheimer’s

Disease and Related Dementias Task Force

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. My name is Gayle Greenhagen and I am the Clinical Manager for Bridge Palliative Care with Bridge Home Health & Hospice. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 24.

Bridge provides services in northwest Ohio to a 9 counties, those of which are rural populations. We are part of Blanchard Valley Health systems where our Mission is “Caring for a Lifetime.”

I support this bill mainly because my team sees many people who suffer due to these illnesses. Suffering of the patients, suffering of the families. With this bill we can make positive changes to reduce this suffering by supporting and educating those who need it through new and improved resources. I have witnessed the difference that these a little help can make in a patient and with their family. My grandmother had dementia and my parents cared for her at home. It is not easy being a caregiver to someone with memory related issues. My father was a primary caregiver to my mother, and as my father’s health declined, we had to make the hard choice to place my grandmother in a nursing facility. I believe that if we would have had more support at home, my grandmother could have remained at home longer and with a better quality of life. I took on the task of educating my parents about this disease, but not everyone has a nurse for a daughter. My team strives to help patients and their caregivers understand these diseases and help prepare them for the inevitable progression of the disease. We alone are not enough. We need more resources in Ohio for patients with dementia related issues.

I am a strong supporter of Senator Hackett’s proposed amendment to designate Associations as members of the Alzheimer’s Task Force. My organization is a member of the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice. As a member, we see an opportunity to work with the organization to provide ideas and feedback, which will then be relayed by our delegate on the task force. I am also supportive of the inclusion of a family member to assist the person with Alzheimer’s or dementia related afflictions. These diseases are progressive in nature therefore, for the safety and comfort of the patient, it is important to include a family member.

I ask for your support of Senate Bill 24 and Senator Hackett’s amendment, which strengthen the bill. This bill will lead Ohio in a positive direction to help educate and support those dealing with dementia related diseases. Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.