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Testimony before the Senate Health Committee  
House Bill 96  
May 13, 2025

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Golden Buckeye Center for Dementia Caregiving, which is included in the Ohio Department of Aging section of the state operating budget for SFYs 2026 and 2027.

My name is Karen Rose, and I proudly serve as dean and professor at The Ohio State University College of Nursing. I am a gerontology nursing research expert and the co-director of the Golden Buckeye Center for Dementia Caregiving.

Our center, which is housed at our College of Nursing, was created in conjunction with Ohio's Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Statewide Resource Program. This collaborative effort led by the Ohio Department of Aging aims to deliver information, education and resources to enhance the knowledge base and resource infrastructure throughout all of Ohio to support dementia family and friend caregivers.

Here in Ohio, nearly 237-thousand people live with dementia, and approximately half a million informal caregivers provide care for them. The latest research now shows that the estimated lifetime risk of dementia is 42% for individuals over age 55. **That's more than double previous estimates.** The rising demand for dementia care, coupled with workforce shortages and access challenges, will continue to place an even greater strain on our informal caregiving networks. These unprecedented projections underscore the importance of supporting dementia caregivers for many years to come.

I would venture to assume that many of us in this room have experienced how caregivers provide comfort and service to people they care deeply about. It's easy for caregivers to feel like they're on an island when they are providing that help to a loved one or a patient living with dementia. And they give so much *of* themselves, sometimes they struggle with caring *for* themselves.

Our center is designed to help as they answer that calling to care – with education, resources, research and support services both in-person and virtually for family caregivers, primary care clinicians, first responders and employers across Ohio to build **connection, competence and confidence**. I'm pleased to share that during our first year of operation, the Golden Buckeye Center for Dementia Caregiving provided outreach, training, referral and support to nearly 10-thousand Ohioans. More than 7-hundred of those Ohioans received in-person, topic-specific training delivered by our educators and subject matter experts.

As we move forward at the Center, we look to expand our offerings to serve even more individuals. Some of our priorities on the horizon include enhancing the geriatric workforce across the continuum of care, implementation of a dementia simulation lab inclusive of virtual reality experiences, our ongoing commitment to supporting family and friend caregivers and expanding our statewide impact through new and existing partnerships such as OSU Extension.

The Ohio State University College of Nursing is grateful for the continued support and partnership of the Ohio Department of Aging. We urge the Senate to maintain this investment to ensure Ohioans can continue to have access to these vital tools that, again, help them answer that calling to care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

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