

House Bill 441 (Plummer, West)

Proponent Testimony

Joe Russell, Executive Director

June 9, 2020



OHIO COUNCIL
FOR HOME CARE & HOSPICE

Chairman Lang, Vice Chairman Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Joe Russell and I am the Executive Director at the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice (OCHCH). Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 441.

The Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice (OCHCH) represents over 600 home care, hospice, and palliative care agencies across the State of Ohio. Our members care for a variety of individuals ranging from medically fragile children, those who wish to recover at home from elective surgeries, mental health and addiction services, older Ohioans that wish to age in place, and many more.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, 6 out of 10 individuals living with dementia are likely to wander, and have a 70% possibility of having an encounter with a first responder. An encounter with a person diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia without appropriate training could turn into an unnecessarily disruptive event. Having proper training and education for police officers and emergency medical service personnel would enhance the coordination and interactions that they have with those individuals and their families.

First responders are trained to manage high-stress and chaotic situations so they can do their jobs effectively. However, some health related issues—whether they be developmental, physical, psychological, or a result of medical trauma—make it difficult for first responders to do their job because of the *bona fide* nature of the affliction. People suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia related diseases fall into that category. While they may look "normal", the disease may prevent a person from complying with directives or even appear to resist those directives. This bill will give our brave public servants the special tools to effectively serve these fragile Ohioans.

OCHCH supports increasing the standards of education for those industries that could have an encounter, and/or those that care for people with Alzheimer's and dementia related afflictions. The training encompassed in this bill would better equip our first responders on how they can help individuals affected by these diseases.

We would like to commend Representative Plummer and Representative West for the introduction of this legislation that will pave the way for the necessary education for those who interact with individuals impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia related diseases.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 441 and please do not hesitate to contact me at joe@ochch.org or 614-885-0434 ext. 208 should any questions arise.