

Senator Gelser and Senator Heard-

I read in the guidelines for the June 3rd 12:00 Senate Interim Committee on Human Services Session to e-mail public testimony.

I am writing to make sure the voice of designated family caregivers of loved ones in Alzheimer's Memory Care communities is heard during the testimony on the COVID impact on the rights and safety of Individuals with Disabilities. My husband has younger onset Alzheimer's disease (64 years of age) and is in a memory care only community in Multnomah County. Thankfully, there have been no coronavirus cases in the community of approximately 60 residents, and the facility is doing a very good job of protecting our loved ones. Prior to the Governor's orders of restricting entrance to care communities to medical personnel, staff, and family of residents at end of life, I would provide care support to my husband for 2-6 hours a day.

The restrictions to protect him and all residents and staff in the community have obviously been necessary, but there has been significant progression in my husband's Alzheimer's disease due to my not being able to support his care. As the Oregon Health Authority makes plans and a timeline for easing the restrictions to care communities and for safe re-entry, it is so critical for there to be a component of the plan for a specific family member to have timely access for the care of their loved ones. My husband continues to have a rapid decline in both cognitive and physical functioning to the point where we are now looking at him going on hospice. The difference from over two and a half months ago when I was last able to be with him in the facility is devastating. Although my husband has been battling Alzheimer's disease for almost 8 years and moved to a care facility from home 15 months ago, he had otherwise been extremely healthy physically. We have been fortunate that he is in such a quality care facility, but I was the one to support his physical, emotional and cognitive well being in order to maximize his last bit of normalcy, joy, and health.

I have been in self-isolation for 81 days, and have avoided any potential of exposure to COVID-19 in order to ensure being healthy for when the restriction for family care providers is lifted.

Please make sure testimony from stakeholders offer ways to keep all residents, staff, and family members safe within care communities from COVID-19, but have a plan to mitigate the ravaging impact on the health of residents, especially in memory care, due to the restrictions for even one designated health care representative family member to enter at this time.

I would appreciate any information on the timeline and plan for allowing healthy designated family caregivers to re-enter care communities.

Thank you in advance for your time in this extremely difficult situation.

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