

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today because my family has experienced the pain and suffering of care for a loved one suffering from dementia. My Mom just passed after a long arduous struggle with dementia which was first diagnosed over 10 years ago. I know first hand what works and doesn't work and the care that is needed not only for the patient but the family. This disease is cruel, inhumane and can tear apart families, thus why I am a very strong advocate for small group homes.

When I say small, I am aware currently that the State of Oregon only allows for 5 residents in a home at this time. We personally experienced how hard these caregivers work and what they give of themselves for our loved ones. That is why I am asking you to allow for 7 residents per home. With 7 residents the home would financially be able to afford a second caregiver which would diminish turnover from burnout. The service these caregivers provide their patients is heartwarming, caring, professional but physically and emotionally exhausting. These homes need to have the ability to provide their employees/caregivers a reprieve. Research has proven that the Caregivers in a small home build good relationships with the residents and are able to provide individual care tailored to their needs. We found our Mom and the other Residents in our Mom's home loved the Caregivers that cared for them. They trusted them because they knew them. In a facility staff changes constantly if not different rooms, different floors. Dementia patients need stability and as much familiarity as possible.

I also understand that due to the deep pockets of the "institutional" care homes they are pushing hard to make it difficult for the small homes to survive. This is where you as a legislature must step in and stop the "big business", "turn key" non attached facilities from ruining what works for our loved ones in the final years of their lives and what is needed for our loved ones. You and I will be that resident one day. Do you want to be in a big cold institution type home or in a place that feels like home?

Studies prove that small group homes provide better quality care and a DOMESTIC environment where people can live as individuals and families can get involved. It has been proven it is better for the resident to feel at home. Dementia patients need routine and quietness. In small group homes they have a living room just like they did in their home and can spend time talking with the other residents, do puzzles and socialize. But, can go to their own home when they so feel. By living in a small residence the dementia patient can continue to maintain their familiar activities like setting the table or washing-up, and this helps them to maintain their identity and feel at home. From our own experience it would be great though if our Dad could have joined our Mom with overnight stays. The wonderful home our Mom was in made it possible for our Dad to eat with Mom at the dining table with the other residence.

Probably one of my biggest points for pleading with you to maintain and allow small group homes for dementia patients the ability to have 7 residents is for those in the family that feel guilty putting their loved one in a home or a facility. It truly is the most difficult decision a family must make. Our Mom was still alive, but was gone. In the group home, we found, and it has been proven that family members are able to get more involved in the group home than they could in a facility. In a group home you are treated as a member, rather than a visitor. The family member visits more regularly and often help with personal care and chores. Our Mom was at home and we felt so much better about our decision.

Please note that we did consider a couple institutional homes for our Mom before we placed her in a home that felt like a home. As we visited many facilities the one thing, I walked away with at every location was my Mom wouldn't be at home. She would have different people caring for her daily. She

wouldn't know them, and they wouldn't know them. She also would not garner friendships and relationships, nor would we have the ability to be a family sitting in a large facility. And, patients/residents deserve humility and dignity no matter their state of mind.

I plead with you to not let lobbyist push their agenda for destroying the small residential homes for our loved ones, but instead you push to make it better and easier for the small foster care homes to flourish. You will be a resident one day. Think about that!

Kindly and with all my heart I pray you hear me!

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