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On Behalf Of: Ore St Cn for Retired Citizens-United Seniors-OCL  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB796

Testimony  
SB 596, Oregon Memory Net  
Senate Health Care Committee, February 8, 2023

I'm Jim Davis, a retired gerontologist/psychologist and professor, representing the Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens, United Seniors of Oregon, and the Oregon Consumer League. Myself and my fellow advocates are here to express our strong support of SB 596, which would create the Oregon Memory Net.

There are close to 70,000 Oregonians living with dementia, but so many tens of thousands more have early dementia that has not been detected. Dementia is a public health crisis made all the worse by the shortages of medical/health professionals able to diagnose and treat dementia. Patients can wait for months to access dementia diagnosis services.

The Oregon Memory Net would be affiliated with one of the nation's few National Institute on Aging-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers at the Oregon Health Sciences University. A memory assessment clinic would be established outside the Portland metro area. It will be able to provide an early and accurate diagnosis, as well as access to treatment options and support services for all involved in both urban and rural areas.

Early diagnosis is so very important to those with dementia and their loved ones. It can improve the outcome, limit emergency room visits, and offer needed opportunities for more comprehensive care management, including locating appropriate support services, determining service eligibility, establishing safety precautions, and developing financial strategies. It will delay entry into long term services and supports and allow the patient to focus on important life issues.

We ask for your support of SB 596.