

PLEASE SUPPORT SB 22-079
Dementia Training Requirements

According to the Alzheimer's Association, Colorado falls short of other states and the association's standards regarding dementia training for our direct care workforce. Our current laws and regulations are vague and do not require a sufficient level of skill and knowledge for staff. Training requirements vary among care settings, so a person living with dementia can experience varied levels of care quality. This would standardize training requirements for all direct care staff who are most likely to care for individuals living with dementia.

DRCOG supports increases in the quality of care and consumer protections for older adults and their caregivers. DRCOG urges the state, when making decisions regarding funding for long-term care programs, to structure such funding to protect the quality of care for residents and participants.

The vast majority of people living with dementia are 65 years of age or older. And for those older adults in care facilities, dementia training for the direct care workforce is a critical component because the number of Coloradans living with dementia is rising rapidly; individuals living with dementia rely on direct care staff more often; dementia training strengthens the direct care workforce; and dementia care training helps improve quality of care.

We believe SB 22-079 will enable an important improvement in the quality of care for all Coloradans with dementia served in care facilities.

For further information, please contact:

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House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services
 03/15/2022 01:30 PM
 SB22-079 Dementia Training Requirements CDPHE DHCPF Rules
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Virginia Gebhart For Self	<p>Please vote yes to pass this bill. Dementia training for workers will improve the lives of workers and the lives of the residents of nursing homes and assisted living centers.</p> <p>My mother died from Alzheimer's Disease in 2002. I can tell you that the caregivers where she lived had hearts of gold, yet many lacked training that would have improved the care my mother received. Shortly before she passed, a new owner took over the assisted living center where she lived. The changes for the better were immediate and substantial. The management and staff were far better trained and it made all the difference for my mother.</p> <p>Please vote yes to pass this bill. It will lead to better working conditions and better caregiving for our vulnerable elders.</p>
Moe Keller For Mental Health Colorado	<p>Testimony for SB22-79, Dementia Training Requirements Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Department of Health Care Policy and Financing Rules</p> <p>My name is Moe Keller, Director of Advocacy for Mental Health Colorado. Mental Health Colorado supports SB22-079, Dementia Training Requirements.</p> <p>Mental Health Colorado's mission is to promote Healthier MInds Across the Life Span. Unfortunately, as many of us age, we can develop various forms and severity of dementia. Still, being treated with respect, receiving proper care, and being surrounded by a caring staff can make our final years less confusing and as comforting as possible. To do this, staff need to be properly trained on how best to respond to the manifestations of dementia, which can be surprising and/or difficult. As you probably know, Dementia is defined as a spectrum of brain disorders that involve difficulty with memory and thinking. SB22-079 requires dementia training for staff in a variety of facilities, including assisted living and nursing homes. These facilities are often the last home that seniors will reside in for the remainder of their lives. Training for staff is also a benefit to the staff themselves. Knowing better what to do gives some assurance and feeling of competence, rather than rely on guess work.</p> <p>One reason often cited by staff leaving employment situations and facilities that work with seniors is burn out or frustration at not always knowing what to do.</p>

	<p>Lack of professional growth/development opportunities is often mentioned as a reason staff leaves. Staff retention could be enhanced by dementia training. In addition, training of staff makes staff feel important and valued in the role they play in their mission of care. Finally, the required staff training is four hours, with a two hour continuing education requirement every two years. This is a minimum imposition on facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living, or adult day care facilities, making this training doable. Please promote Healthier MInds Across the Life Span and vote for SB22-079 Dementia Training Requirements.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
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