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February 12, 2026

Senator Cabral-Guevara  
Room 323 South  
State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53708

Re: Senate Bill 959 relating to requirements for the use of a memory care designation by community-based residential facilities

Dear Chair Cabral-Guevara,

On behalf of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging, we are writing today in support of Senate Bill 959 relating to requirements for the use of a memory care designation by community-based residential facilities. In Milwaukee County, 12.5 percent of older adults are diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia, which is approximately 17,000 individuals. Families and caregivers of those individuals are dedicated to ensuring that their loved ones receive the best possible care. SB 959 is a step forward in ensuring that there are improvements in our long-term care facilities.

Individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementia make up a significant portion of those living in community-based residential facilities. In Wisconsin, 25 percent of individuals with dementia live in a long-term care facility. They often have unique needs that may make care delivery and communication more challenging. Some facilities in Wisconsin offer memory care units for residents living with dementia. However, these do not have additional licensing requirements that qualify them to deliver specialized care to these residents, causing Wisconsinites to pay more each month for services they may not be receiving and which may not be dementia-friendly.

SB 959 offers reasonable solutions to address these concerns including training for facility administrators and staff that includes education on dementia, person-centered dementia care, effective communication, behavioral interventions and alternatives to medication, and supporting independence and quality of life. We are supportive of the provisions in this bill that highlight dignity, autonomy, and meaningful engagement in daily care activities. All individuals deserve to receive respectful, high-quality individualized care, no matter where they reside.

Offering memory care should be more than just an advertising term. It should designate that the facility is capable of and has staff available to provide care to individuals living with dementia and their unique needs. Nine of the twelve Midwest states require that facilities receive certification or meet specific requirements to operate a memory care unit or wing. Nationwide, 37 states have these requirements. We want Wisconsin to be next.

It is crucial that we enact provisions protecting the safety of our loved ones residing in community-based residential facilities. Everyone deserves the highest quality of care possible provided by educated professionals. We are supportive of SB 959 and the considerations it provides for the unique needs of Alzheimer's and dementia residents. We urge your support and hope it will be scheduled for a vote soon.

Thank you for your continued support of Milwaukee County's older adults. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Denise Callaway  
Chair  
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging



Brian Peters  
Legislative Advocacy Officer  
Milwaukee County Commission on Aging