

Testimony to the Joint House and Senate Appropriations  
Committee February 20, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Alzheimer's is a very emotional subject for me. I don't know if I will be able to speak my whole testimony. Please read my written testimony. I am here to share with you why I think Adult Day Centers are an important part of our health care system. My name is Ward Nial. I am an Aerospace Engineer who retired from UTC Aerospace. I have been an advocate for people with mental health conditions since 2016. I am the primary caregiver for my wife Lois who has early onset Alzheimer's.

I see Lois being supported by a chair with four legs. The legs being God, Community, me and herself. I am supported by a similar chair. Alzheimer's is taking away the "her" leg from both of our chairs. It is very hard to live with. Luba Routsong describes dementia in these words. "It is a disease that robs her of heart, soul, and body, a disease of perpetual loss."

We don't use Adult Day Care yet. Lois is the middle stages of the disease and doesn't need that level right now. I attend the Alzheimer's Association Caregivers Support group in Williston.

There I learned just how important Adult Day Care is. It can be part of the Community leg of her support chair. Yet, it will provide more than just support for her chair, it can also strengthen both the "me" and "her" legs on our chairs. Adult Day Care is a special place for someone struggling with this disease. I am afraid that it may not be available when we need it.

Both my wife and I want her to be in her own home for as long as possible. I believe you want the same thing. Residential and memory care beds are a limited and very expensive resource. I don't want nor do I think Vermont can afford to have many people supported there. I believe Adult Day Care will help me and minimize the length of time Lois will need that level of care.

I understand that each part of the health care system reports on separate accounting spreadsheets. That makes it very difficult to show how money spent for Adult Day Care will actually save money for the whole system. But I believe your "Gut Feel" is telling you it will.

A relatively small investment in Adult Day programs now will save the state a lot of money in more intensive care options."

Best Regards,  
Ward Nial  
South Burlington Vermont