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Assembly Bill 786
Testimony of State Representative Mike Rohrkaste
Assembly Committee on Mental Health Reform
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Thank you, Chair Tittl, and members of the Committee on Mental Health Reform for holding this public hearing.

Assembly Bill 786 requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to create a report analyzing where individuals with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia are placed in crisis situations. This legislation also directs DHS to propose a pilot program for coalitions of two or more counties to create dementia crisis units. We need to make sure that these individuals are being placed in the appropriate settings when crises occur.

During our travels throughout the state, the Speaker's Task Force heard numerous times about the lack of appropriate placement for those living with Alzheimer's or other dementias in crisis situations. We heard from both the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin, as well as people from the nursing homes and community-based residential facilities, who are concerned about the appropriate placement of these individuals.

These dementia crisis units would be an option for placement of individuals with Alzheimer's or other dementias who are in crisis situations rather than a call to police or other emergency response teams to handle the situation. A specially trained unit will be better prepared to address the unique symptoms of Alzheimer's or other dementia and proceed to a better outcome for the person and family.

Passage of AB 786 will help the legislature and other concerned parties to understand where we are currently placing individuals with Alzheimer's or other dementia in crisis situations and would also help everyone to understand what an appropriate dementia crisis unit might look like. If successful, these units could be replicated.

Thank you for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions.