



**LD 859 An Act to Assess, Develop, Implement and Fund the Reuse of  
Existing Facilities at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center to Provide  
Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder and Homelessness Services**

**As Amended  
Testimony in Support  
May 8, 2023**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN. I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in support of this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with more than 10,000 employees statewide.

I want to thank Senator Baldacci for sponsoring this bill and offering an amendment to include Northern Light Health, St. Joseph's Hospital and the City of Bangor in discussion with leadership at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Hospital to review existing building structures. We are in full support of discussing, planning and implementing supportive housing for individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

The resolve also references collaborations to address the services needed by those most in need of mental health care. We have discussed many times in this committee the issue of emergency room long stays for blue papered individuals waiting for admission to a psychiatric inpatient bed. We know demand for care exceeds capacity thus the emergency room delays. We look forward to discussing the challenges with the long stay population and their unique needs in the context of evaluating building capacity at Dorothea Dix.

Thank you.

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Maine Coast Hospital  
Mayo Hospital  
Mercy Hospital  
Northern Light Health Foundation  
Northern Light Laboratory  
Northern Light Pharmacy  
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