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WESTBROOK  
LD 445

Maine's proud state motto adopted in 1820 is Dirigo : I lead

Yet

We are behind in Maine in applying for a waiver for IMD exclusions for the treatment of serious brain illnesses.

The Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion prohibits the use of federal Medicaid financing for care provided to most patients in mental health and substance use disorder residential treatment facilities larger than 16 beds.

Maine has applied and gotten a waiver for Medicaid financing for substance abuse disorder.

Now let's get that waiver for serious brain disorders by passing L.D. 445 !

L.D.445 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply for a waiver for the discriminatory Medicaid limitation on payment to appropriate services.

If any members of the Maine Legislature are still asking why should I vote for L.D.445 ???---I can tell you that is so easy to answer if you have loved, cared for, worked with, or known someone who got sick with a serious brain disorder.

It is way past time to offer proactive and more continuum financially covered treatments for serious brain disorders. Sometimes our loved ones need hospitalization with constant care ....and other times what they need is community support and care.

If you have never had to walk with someone you care about who had a serious brain disorder and you had a lack of financial supported treatment options for their care, please take time to read this piece that I wrote in support of another bill -LD 1994. My learnings come from over 28 years of personal experience with our son , with 2 of my siblings, and with my students whom I loved too!

Stand in my shoes

This is one of the practices that I developed and applied in my work as a behavior strategist in public schools with children with complex conditions who had a distressing conflict with an other. The practice was an exercise that I called stand in my shoes. I had varied pairs of shoes available in my classroom that I had gotten from our families pile of shoes!. I always began the by having my student stand first in his/ /her own shoes and tell descriptively who was involved, where they were, and what went down in the conflict- including how it impacted them – their emotions and their reactions. Then they would move to other pair(s) of shoes ( representing the person(s) he/she had the wipe out conflict with) and express what they thought was going down for each person. It was a substantive, powerful, and forward moving exercise . I try to practice it in my life daily.

Here is an example of how I applied it in my written support of a bill ( LD 1994) in our state legislature:

An Act To Establish The Progressive Treatment Program Fund

As you consider how you will vote on funding LD 1994, please take a moment to stand in the shoes of those with first hand primary experience. Stand in my son with smi's shoes-my son who has suffered losses unimaginably painful and profound and who gratefully is still with us . Stand in my mother shoes. I have been living with, standing by, and feeling pain and sorrow without bounds from witnessing the devastation of my son's so serious brain based illness on his life for 28 years now. Then- if you have had no experience with serious mental illness- imagine it like having someone you love lose all of their limbs and still try to carry on- and yet with smi , their loss is not visible and thus less attended to or recognized or understood. Their loss is a no fault brain based illness and more invisible . And so

again I ask, please take a moment to stand in our shoes . Let kindness show you the way and vote to fund LD 1994.

Let kindness show you the way again and vote for L.D. 445

Thank you.

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