

March 17, 2023

Good Morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is April Kerr, I am a resident of Farmington and I am here today to testify **in opposition to LD 445 Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Apply for a Waiver from the Federal Government for the Medicaid Limitation on Payment to a Facility with More Than 16 Inpatient Beds for Psychiatric Treatment.**

I am a person with lived experience and have navigated through various types of the Maine Mental Health system since the 90s. One of my experiences was when my daughter was involuntarily hospitalized during a time of crisis. It was very traumatizing and impacted her as well as our family dynamics in a very negative way. She was terrified and humiliated after being restrained and given a shot, stripped down, and thrown into a seclusion room without any warnings. This was just one of the many harmful things that she experienced during her stay in a psychiatric facility. This added trauma to her already troubled life. As a result, she carries much of this with her still today. It was not helpful. The cost to her and our family was horrific in many ways. Had we been able to utilize supports and services in our community it would have been not only cost-effective but a healing process vs a traumatizing one for all of us.

It has been my experience that people respond better if they are not forced into treatment. They may at some point consent to treatment, but if they don't fully agree then the success of its effectiveness is not going to be long-term. Thus, time and money have not been well spent.

Also, currently, there is the issue of the number of beds and if there is an availability when the need arises to seek one out. What is the process of attaining this information? How do we know? Do you know how many there are available right now? No, you say? Then why would you spend money buying more of what you may already have plenty of? For example, a hotelier owns or manages a hotel and must have knowledge of how many rooms/beds are available, ie: what is their capacity? To address this situation they have a tracking system to check availability before they can determine whether or not they have enough empty rooms to accommodate

their guests. Without this system it would be very difficult or next to impossible to know what the availability is which would bring a major loss or lack there of. If they were to build more rooms and have more beds without accurate information of if the ones that were in place were being utilized to their capacity it would quite possibly be a waste of time, space, and money.

In closing, I urge you to vote **“Ought Not to Pass” LD 445.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

April Kerr
Farmington