



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF L.D 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"***

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Cross Building 209  
Date: March 14, 2023

Representative Meyer, Senator Baldacci and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Henry Skinner, MD and this testimony represents the position of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians (MAPP), of which I am the President.

This bill directs the Department to apply for a waiver to obtain federal funding for mental health services for Mainers. The point of the Waiver is that the funds can be used for a wide variety of mental health service projects, not just more inpatient facilities. In recent years Maine has expanded the number of inpatient psychiatric beds and the challenge in utilizing them has been staffing. Our state has already been tapping similar Waiver funding for substance use treatment projects for several years. Apparently, the hesitation in applying for the mental health funding was the mistaken impression that it could only be applied to funding more inpatient beds. Other states have been granted waivers to use these funds for many kinds of sorely needed mental health treatment projects.

There are literally dozens of good ways to utilize increased federal funds for mental health services. One excellent use of IMD waiver funds would be to finally establish a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility ("secure residential") so that we can bring home the 100+ youth in out-of-state residential care and also stop trying to use Long Creek as a residential treatment center of last resort. See also LD 181.

For background information, I am including this link to NAMI's website explaining their position in favor of these IMD waivers: [https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2018/NAMI-Excited-with-New-Opportunities-to-Improve-Medicaid-Mental-Health-Care-\(IMD\)](https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2018/NAMI-Excited-with-New-Opportunities-to-Improve-Medicaid-Mental-Health-Care-(IMD))

The following article thoroughly describes how many other states have been using their IMD waivers in creative and important ways: <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/states-are-leveraging-medicare-waivers-5534902/>

Separately, I have uploaded through the testimony portal an important letter from CMS to State Medicaid Directors issued in 2018, titled "Opportunities to Design Innovative Service Delivery Systems for Adults with a Serious Mental Illness or Children with a Serious Emotional Disturbance."

I can't think of a single valid reason for the Department NOT to apply for this free federal money and I urge you to give LD 445 an "ought to pass."

As always, I ask you to keep in mind that everything you do to improve Mainers' mental health also supports workforce development.

Thank you very much for your careful consideration of this bill.