



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine
The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of LD 587

"Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases"

Sponsored by Senator Eric Brakey

March 22, 2023

~ Officers ~

Dave McCluskey, President
Community Care

Greg Bowers, 1st Vice-President
Day One

Bob Descoteaux, 2nd Vice-President

MaineGeneral Behavioral Health

Kara Hay, Secretary
Penquis CAP Inc.

Ellen Bemis, Treasurer
Arroostook Mental Health Center

Eric Meyer, Past President
Spurwink

~ Board Members ~

Adcare Educational Institute
ARC at Mid Coast Hospital
Alternative Services, NE, Inc.

Androscoggin Home & Healthcare
Assistance Plus

Catholic Charities, Maine
Co-occurring Collaborative
Serving Maine

Christopher Aaron Center
Common Ties

Community Caring Collaborative
Community Health & Counseling

COR Health

Crisis & Counseling Centers
Crossroads Maine

Genoa Healthcare &
Telepsychiatry

Kennebec Behavioral Health
Maine Behavioral Health

Organization

Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Milestone Recovery

NFI North, Inc.

Northern Light/Acadia

Portland Recovery Community
Center

Pathways of Maine

Rumford Group Homes

Brighter Heights Maine

Sunrise Opportunities

Sweetser

TriCounty Mental Health Services
Wellspring, Inc.

Wings for Children & Families
Woodfords Family Services

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and hardworking members of the Health and Human Services Committees. My name is Malory Shaughnessy and I am the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's community based mental health and substance use treatment providers, providing services to over 80,000 Maine men, women, and children. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

On behalf of the Alliance, I am here today to speak in support of LD 587, "Resolve, to Automatically Increase a Residential Care or Nursing Facility Resident's Personal Needs Allowance Under the MaineCare Program When the Consumer Price Index Increases." We are all aware that the cost of living has gone up across the board and that is why we support this proposal – with caution.

Our caution is that in implementing this increase, we need to ensure that the cost isn't passed on to the providers.

As we understand the proposal, the increase in the personal needs allowance would only apply to MaineCare members who have cost of care assessed. The personal needs allowance is essentially an income disregard and is intended to assure that members with limited incomes who spend over a month in a nursing facility of private non-medical institution(PNMI) have some funds left over for personal expenditures.

If the personal needs allowance is increased, the disregard is also increased, so in order to avoid the costs coming from the providers, the department would need to make up the difference in the cost of care – creating a fiscal note. Your analyst, upon our inquiry, has informed us that, as far as which PNMI's this applies to – cost of care is assessed for Cs and Fs. There is a question whether cost of care is assessed for Bs and Es. We are hoping to hear that information from the Department today.

So, in conclusion, everyone's cost of living has increased, and it is for that reason that I urge members to vote ought to pass on LD 587 and to ensure the Department will fund the increase. I am happy to answer any questions you have.