



Woodfords FAMILY SERVICES

Written Testimony of Pete Plummer, Chief Operating Officer
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LD659 An Act to Promote Seamless and Flexible Home and Community Supports Across the
Lifespan for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) or Autism
March 21, 2023

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committees. My name is Pete Plummer, Chief Operating Officer for Woodfords Family Services. Woodfords Family Services is a Not for Profit 501 c (3) organization with it's central office in Westbrook, Maine. Woodfords offers a variety of services throughout central, and southern Maine. Woodfords also offers services to all ages from early IDD diagnosis through adulthood. Many of which are currently offered under Section 13 (Case Management), Section 21 (Home and Community Benefits Members with IDD or Autism), and Section 29 (Support Services for Adults with IDD or Autism); where the MaineCare beneficiaries are directly affected by this change. In layman's terms the services offered under these MaineCare sections are Agency Home Supports, Independent Living Supports, Shared Living Supports and Community Day Programming Supports. In addition Woodfords provides Section 13 (Targeted Case Management Services) for adults and Section 92 (Behavioral Health Home Services) for children, formerly known as Case Management for children. Woodfords also offers many other services that are within the age and service continuum of individuals with IDD, as that is our mission. Examples include Home Support for Children and Adults, School Based Services in our Special Purpose Programs for preschoolers as well as K-5; in addition to the programs noted above that will be directly affected by this Lifespan Waiver legislation for 14 year olds through adulthood.

Woodfords applauds the Department for reimagining services and supports for people with disabilities and for creating additional options under the proposed Lifespan Program. We especially appreciate the coordination between OADS and OCFS and the consideration that is being given to streamline entry into the adult system and to eliminate the longstanding "cliff" and waiting period that young adults with disabilities and their families face when aging out of the children's services system in hopes of accessing services in the adult system.

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In this testimony, I would like to focus on the work that is done in Case Management for the young children to ensure a smooth transition. Woodfords currently has a “Transition Specialist” that specializes in supporting the transition of Children into the Adult service world. This transition work involves many services for the individual and families with children with IDD transitioning to adulthood that are outside the realm of the Department of Health and Human Services, but are required by OADS. For example, Legal Guardianship, Representative Payee, Waiver Applications, Adult MaineCare Eligibility, IEP Transition Meetings, Housing, Food Stamps, Social Security Benefits, and various Crisis moments that occur. These examples and more, is the work the current Case Managers do. Once these service are set up, the goal is to maintain them. I fear the new model that eliminates this MaineCare Section 13 and transitions these kids into Care Coordination identified in Section 20, which has a current rate that is less than 70% of the current Section 13 Case Management rate of \$24.55 per 15 minutes. The rate seems reasonable, but a lot of the needed services are non-billable requirements, meaning a Case Manager can only bill for a portion of their day. All I am stating is that to make this Lifespan Waiver work properly, the Case Managers or Care Coordinators will be key in the success of this new service. Without these key positions, I fear that there will be insufficient Care Coordinators to manage the work. In fact, Care Coordinators should be valued and upgraded to Case Managers, with an appropriate Case Manager MaineCare rate, and not the reduced Care Coordinator MaineCare rate of \$17.00 per 15 minutes for the partial time that is billable. In all honesty, the Case Manager rate of \$24.55, even after the slight increase from the Burns work, is undervalued and it is difficult to find and retain seasoned professionals in this field.

To make this new system work, the role of the Case Managers will be key in supporting the needs of the MaineCare beneficiary receiving the care that Home and Community Based regulations require, which we agree with. This is a significant redesign and I only share this one example as a stakeholder in offering some insight as to how a successful transition can take place.

Thank you for reading my comments.

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