

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA – MAINE CHAPTER
126 Western Av. #261
Augusta ME 04330

Written Testimony for LD 539

March 27, 2023

Dear members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

Co-occurring brain injury and substance use disorder (SUD) is a critical issue affecting more than half of all brain injury survivors. On behalf of the Maine brain injury community – survivors, caregivers and families – we urge your support of LD 539 that will restore substance use counseling services to the MaineCare Section 102 outpatient neurorehabilitation programs.

The Section 102 programs address SUD and brain injury together, through an interdisciplinary approach. This integrated approach is often the key to successful treatment when brain injury co-occurs with SUD.

Many more Mainer's are now living with brain injury as a result of the overdose crisis. Individuals who survive an overdose often sustain hypoxic/anoxic brain injury from loss of oxygen to the brain. This is a new and growing population of persons with co-occurring brain injury and SUD.

Survivors often find it difficult to access SUD services from a community-based SUD agency. This is because brain injury cannot be considered a primary diagnosis for the MaineCare Section 65 SUD programs, so eligibility is a barrier to accessing treatment.

Thank you for considering our testimony today. We stand ready to answer any questions that you may have about the increasing incidence of brain injury within Maine's ongoing overdose crisis and best-practice in treating these complex disorders when co-occurring.

Respectfully submitted,

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