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Brunswick
LD 473

I am Hilary Hendricks, Director of Philanthropy at Independence Association in Brunswick. We are a non-profit that began in 1966 to support people with developmental disabilities. I am submitting written testimony supporting RE: LD 473: Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program.

Applied Behavior Analysis is an evidence-based approach to reduce or eliminate harmful behaviors for individuals with complex behavioral challenges. ABA approach and its techniques can help improve social skills, self-care skills, communication skills, and the ability to manage their own behavior. I am requesting the hours be amended to reflect a minimum of 120 per year and be extended to individuals on Section 29.

Currently, Maine uses no clinical approach to support adults with complex behavioral needs. Aside from Dr. Le'Ann Millender, Maine has no clinical practitioners on their behavior plan review teams. The answer to any individual with a complex behavioral need is to authorize additional staffing.

ABA is a proven approach. Children in Maine who have thrived under ABA services in preschool until the age of 18, suddenly do not have the same services in adulthood. Section 28 currently allows a minimum of 120 hours and up to 136 to address the complex behavioral needs of children with intellectual disabilities and autism. They are not cured when they become adults and can benefit from a similar approach in therapy. The current amount of 16.5 hours per year is not enough time to develop a Functional Behavioral Analysis. The reason Maine's behavior management plans do not show progress and appear to continue indefinitely is because they are not authored or managed by a BCBA, and BCBA's do not want to identify with a service that they know ethically cannot be addressed within 16.5 hours.