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Celebrating Ability Since 1966

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To: Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyers and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

From: Kim Carpenter, Director of Finance

Subject: LD 473 Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program

Date: March 29, 2023

Hello, my name is Kim Carpenter. I am the Director of Finance at Independence Association in Brunswick. We are a non-profit organization that has supported people with Intellectual Disabilities since 1966. 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.

Under section 28, children with IDD or Autism with complex behavioral needs, receive ABA services in preschool until the age of 18. Children are eligible to receive a minimum of 120 hours and up to 136 hours if necessary. Once these children enter young adulthood the availability of these services is greatly diminished to only 16.5 hours per year. This cut in services is too drastic, especially at a time when someone is transitioning in to a new phase of their life. In addition, these services are vital throughout an individual's life to help maintain good behaviors and quality of life. I'm requesting that ABA hours for adults be amended to reflect a minimum of 120 per year and be extended to individuals on Section 29.

Increasing ABA hours for adults with IDD or Autism with complex behavioral needs is also less costly in the long run. Behavior support plans are proven to be effective. As clients learn to overcome their behavioral challenges, fewer staffing hours needed to support them and keep them safe.

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Unfortunately, many times, due to staffing shortages, agencies are forced to terminate services for adults with IDD or Autism. This can lead to clients being left in emergency rooms. Agencies are also reluctant to take on clients with greater behavioral needs for the same reasons.

By continuing ABA services at the same level through a person's life, we can offer them a more productive and greater quality of life along with a cost savings to MaineCare.

Thank you.

Kim Carpenter
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