

Cherie LaFlamme
Lewiston
LD 473

Rep. Margaret Craven, and members of the Committee for Health and Human Services. My name is Cherie LaFlamme, BCBA and Clinical Director at R.I.S.E. Inc. In Auburn. I am testifying in support of LD 473 – Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program.

I have worked in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA) since 2001 and have been a BCBA since 2012. In that time I have seen significant growth in the application of the science of ABA. ABA has a reputation of being a set of interventions that are done to an individual. Recent advances in our field have moved toward more compassionate care and creating interventions with the individual being served. Another misconception is that ABA is only beneficial for children with Autism. In reality there is a plethora of research demonstrating the efficacy of ABA with people of all ages, with and without various disabilities.

Adults with disabilities deserve the benefits that having a BCBA on the team can provide. A BCBA is trained to look at all the variables affecting a person's behavior, ability to communicate, and skill development. They are also trained to tease out the motivation behind maladaptive behaviors and look for more safe and appropriate ways for the individual to access the items and activities they desire. BCBAs are trained to break skills down into component parts and systematically teach those skills to individuals, as well as train the caregivers how to teach skills to the people they serve. In the hands of a BCBA there is opportunity, there is assistance, and there is growth potential for any adult to create these life enriching activities that may never happen if a Direct care worker gives up, as many do.

I hope that you will consider increasing access to vital BCBA services for adults with disabilities as I am confident that doing so will increase these individual's quality of life as well as decrease the future need for more intensive services and interventions.

Respectfully submitted,
Cherie LaFlamme, MS, BCBA
Lewiston, Me.