

April 3, 2023

Good Morning/Afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Vickie Morgan, I am a resident of Norway and I am here today to testify **in favor of LD 540 “An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine”**.

In Maine, a Peer Respite Center was available from 2002 to 2017. At that time, the organization operating the program chose to not renew their contract.

Peer Respite is a voluntary program that operates 24/7. It is staff by Peer Support Specialist, who have lived experience with mental health issues. It provides another option for the individual, but it does not replace traditional clinical services, such as, a psychiatric hospital or crisis stabilization unit.

For a person like me who refuses to ever go to the emergency department or psychiatric hospital for mental health issues, due the trauma that I have experience in these settings, it would provide a safe place for me to receive the help that I need.

Peer Respite would free up staff in the emergency department and allow them to take care of the more critically ill patients and provide room in psychiatric hospitals for the individuals that need that level of care.

This program also cost significantly less than emergency departments and psychiatric hospitals and is often more effective.

In closing, I urge you to **pass LD 540**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vickie Morgan

Vickie Morgan
Norway