

Chairman Baldacci, Chairwoman Meyers, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Kathy Rickards and I am the parent of a 42-year-old man with medical, intellectual, and mental health diagnoses that significantly impact his life. Today I am submitting written testimony in favor of LD 473, Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavioral Analysis Services by the Maine Care Program.

My son has a number of challenging behaviors that interfere with daily functioning. One of the most difficult for him and those around him is the compulsion to pick at scabs until there is significant injury and infection. This often leads to the need for antibiotics due to a number of heart defects that could prove life ending in the case of infection. When his anxiety is high, skin picking is one of his maladaptive coping mechanisms. Without increasing the hours for adults for ABA, I fear this cycle of self-injurious behavior will prove fatal one day. ABA has a long history of life changing results for people with challenging behaviors. The state has demonstrated its belief in ABA by allowing 139 total hours in Children's Services. Surely, that need does not go away, and often becomes even more necessary as an adult. My son lives in a group home and the 16.5 current allowable hours does not begin to allow for the continued monitoring and ongoing training for his DSP's to reduce and eliminate these harmful behaviors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and if I can be of any further assistance, please contact me.

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