



April 4, 2023

Dear Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing,

I am writing to testify in support of LD 2: An Act to Address Maine's Housing Crisis. Avesta is the largest nonprofit affordable housing provider in northern New England. We house approximately 4,000 Mainers every day.

Nearly 20 years ago, Avesta Housing and Preble Street opened the doors of Logan Place, Maine's first site-based Housing First community. Logan Place is barrier-free, safe, supportive housing for people who have experienced chronic homelessness. By providing stable homes with 24/7 dedicated support services for its residents, Logan Place reduced the use of community resources, such as shelters, hospitals, emergency services, and more. It also preserved the health, safety, and dignity of the members of our community that are most in need. *It saved lives.*

Avesta has been a nonprofit affordable housing provider for more than 50 years and we have worked closely with more than 100 social service agencies to bring essential support services to our residents so they can live healthy, productive lives. In Avesta's half century of work in Maine, we have learned a lot about housing stability and success. We know firsthand that people who experience chronic homelessness need more than four walls and a roof. Sadly, we also know that people who have experienced long-term chronic homelessness fail in traditional affordable housing at a much higher rate because they don't have the level and frequency of support needed to maintain their health and housing stability. Site-based Housing First communities significantly reduce the rate of failure and prevent individuals from returning to homelessness.

Following the great success of Logan Place, Avesta developed two more site-based housing first communities in partnership with Preble Street -- Florence House completed in 2010 and Huston Commons completed in 2017. Throughout the years we, at Avesta, have seen the proven success of these housing developments and the impact it has on lives and surrounding communities.

Site-based Housing First is a key solution in helping to end chronic homelessness. For this reason, Avesta Housing has remained steadfast in its commitment to expand site-based Housing First in Maine. If LD 2 is passed, we are ready and willing to develop new Housing First communities. LD 2 will bring the critical resources for services and one of the final pieces of funding necessary to scale this model. Avesta has already received outreach from municipalities, and we have started conversation with our peers and key partners so we can mobilize quickly. I ask you to join us and to take action so together we can create more successful communities like Logan Place, Florence House and Huston Commons.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hatfield
President & CEO