



Testimony in Support of

LD 208 – An Act Concerning Home Care Services

April 10, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Tracy Smith and I am the Long Term Services and Supports Director at SeniorsPlus, the Area Agency on Aging in Western Maine. We also are responsible for statewide care coordination serving older adults and adults with disabilities under Sections 19, 96, and 63 of Maine's Long-Term Care system.

SeniorsPlus is the largest provider of service coordination for the LTSS community-based system in the state. We have an ongoing caseload of over 4000 clients statewide who are eligible for assistance to remain at home. Of this number, approximately 1,300 are determined as nursing home level of care but have chosen to remain at home.

I am writing to testify in support of LD 208.

The demand for services across all programs has far exceeded supply. While new providers continue to enroll to serve clients, none of them have enough caregivers to meet the need. The assessment eligibility process gives clients and families a plan of care that outlines the number of hours of care they qualify for and this is often giving false hopes of receiving staffing, for when in reality, they end up on a staffing search list due to limited provider options and/or an inadequate caregiver pool. From January to March and so far in April, SeniorsPlus received a total of 741 new clients. Of those 741 new enrollments, 451 of them were added to the staffing search for the same timeframe and have no staffing at all. Despite being eligible for these in-home supports, an alarming total of 7,600 hours per week of authorized PSS remains unstaffed. An additional 3,800 hours per month of RN hours are unstaffed. These numbers are inclusive of MaineCare programs only. Currently, SeniorsPlus has over 1,500 MaineCare clients (37% of our MaineCare census) who are in need of partial or full plan of care staffing. This implies that there is indeed a waiting list for these services even while technically enrolled in programs.

I believe part of the challenge related to the information published by the Department is the mixed use of the term "waiting list." There are waiting lists due to lack of program funds and there are waiting lists due to lack of staffing. In either case, it means there are barriers to accessing services and this information should be made available publicly.

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of this important legislation to keep providers and home care clients informed.

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