

Ellen Grunblatt
Jay
LD 1204

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Ellen Grunblatt and I am a resident of Jay. I'm a retired physician, a therapist in private practice, and a member of the Franklin County Detention Center Board of Visitors. I'm writing in support of LD 1204, An Act to to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program for Incarcerated Persons.

It is news to no one that we have a fragmented health care system underwritten by a patchwork of programs for health insurance, resulting in significant barriers to obtaining timely and often life-saving health care for Maine residents. Those barriers are especially evident in the correctional system, where incarcerated individuals lose their coverage when they need it the most. The treatment of mental illness and substance use disorder in jails and prisons saves lives, reduces stress among inmates and correctional staff and facilitates reintegration into the community after release. Existing correctional medical providers vary widely in the types of treatment they can offer. Preservation of MaineCare coverage for incarcerated individuals will ensure access to all approved, effective treatment options and free up county resources for much needed community support programs for recovery and behavioral health.

I urge the Committee to recommend passage of this bill.

Sincerely, Ellen Grunblatt, MD, LCPC