



TESTIMONY

In Support of

LD 636; An Act to Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to License and Ensure the Quality of Personal Care Agencies

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

April 10, 2023

Maine Long - Term Care Ombudsman Program

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

The Ombudsman Program staff are pleased to provide testimony in support of this legislation that requires regulatory oversight of Personal Care Agencies that is necessary to assure the quality of care provided by these agencies.

The Ombudsman Program is a nonprofit agency that provides statewide advocacy for older and disabled residents of nursing homes, residential care, assisted living and for recipients of home care services. Additionally, the program serves patients in hospitals who experience barriers in accessing the long-term services and support they need when they are ready for discharge.

It is critical that personal care agencies be licensed and subject to licensing rules that can be enforced by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Certification. Over the years, we have observed several problems with personal care agency services such as: ending staffing for older adults and people with disabilities without notice, complaints about staff employed to provide care who lack sufficient training, and recently, a personal care agency that for an extended period, failed to pay wages for staff providing care. Strengthening quality measures, mandatory minimum training requirements, supervision requirements and providing technical support for administrative processes will make a direct improvement to the health and safety of home care consumers.

The Ombudsman Program staff participated in the stakeholder groups held by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide input for this legislation. Personal care agencies provide services for older and disabled persons with a range of care needs. Regulatory oversight is critically needed to protect and promote quality of care.

We urge your support for this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.