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April 25, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey, Chair
Representative Anne Perry, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1506, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Study the Scarcity of Licensed Clinical Behavioral Health Professionals Across the State*

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information for the Committee's consideration regarding LD 1506, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Study the Scarcity of Licensed Clinical Behavioral Health Professionals Across the State*.

This Resolve would require the Department to convene a stakeholder group to study issues related to training and recruitment of clinical behavioral health professionals. Should the Committee be inclined to move forward with this study, the Office of Behavioral Health would like to share a few suggestions:

- The timeline for reporting should be extended. The current timeline of just 6 months (July 1, 2023 – December 6, 2023) is too tight to generate a quality report.
- Either this should be a study staffed by the Legislature or the Department should be allocated resources to contract with an entity to research, convene, and facilitate this group. OBH does not have existing capacity to do this work.
- Additional or other representatives should have a voice in this conversation, including but not limited to the Consumer Council System of Maine and the Departments of Labor and Professional and Financial Regulation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide information. Please let us know how else we might be of service.

Sincerely,

Sarah Squirrell

Sarah Squirrell
Director, Office of Behavioral Health