

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Commissioner's Office
11 State House Station
109 Capitol Street
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel: (207) 287-3707; Fax: (207) 287-3005
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

May 1, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Chair
Representative Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1684- *An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by Expanding Coordinated Community Programming*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

This letter provides information regarding LD 1684 *An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by Expanding Coordinated Community Programming*. The Department is neither for nor against this bill. We do note that this would require a general fund appropriation outside the Governor's proposed budget.

The State Unit on Aging within the Office of Aging & Disability Services (OADS) is responsible to lead in the development and implementation of a statewide comprehensive and coordinated community-based system in consultation with the five designated area agencies on aging (AAAs). The federal Older Americans Act currently provides limited funding for case management. State funding under the Priority Social Services Program and local funding are also used to provide this service statewide. However, as Maine's older population grows so does the need for case management services. The increased need for this service has been identified during listening sessions, stakeholder meetings, the previous needs assessment for the State Plan on Aging (2020-2024) and recent listening sessions of the Cabinet on Aging.

With additional state funding, the five area agencies on aging would increase their capacity to meet the increasing demand for short-term case management services. As the State Unit on Aging, OADS would work with the area agencies to build capacity, standardize the service, and ensure that case management staff are trained in best practices to assist older adults navigate services across the care continuum.

We note that this request is for a different function than the \$500,000 included in the Governor's budget request. The Governor's budget request is to strengthen the capacity of AAAs to conduct information and referral services through their Aging and Disability Resource Centers. The case management funding requested in this bill would enable the AAAs to assign case managers to the more complex cases they receive and continue assisting an individual for a longer period of time.

We are happy to provide additional information at the work session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul Saucier", is located below the word "Sincerely,".

Paul Saucier, Director
Office of Aging and Disability Services