



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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January 24, 2024

Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
LD 2105, Resolve, to Protect and Enhance Access to Behavioral Health Services in Androscoggin County and Surrounding Communities
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to cosponsor **LD 2105, Resolve, to Protect and Enhance Access to Behavioral Health Services in Androscoggin County and Surrounding Communities**.

LD 2105 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to allocate emergency funding to cover operating losses associated with providing acute behavioral health care services at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, to ensure that those services can be continued and expanded to meet urgent needs. This bill would appropriate one-time funding of \$10,000,000 in fiscal year 2024-25.

As the only provider of most acute behavioral health care services in our region of Androscoggin County, Lewiston-Auburn and surrounding communities rely on St. Mary's to provide them with the crucial care that they need.

Well before the tragic events on October 25th in Lewiston, St. Mary's was the primary provider to those seeking behavioral health services at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having served our community to the best of their ability for decades, with mental health needs steadily increasing and funding steadily decreasing, St. Mary's is now faced with potentially abandoning their plans to provide new and expanded behavioral health services, in the wake of a mass shooting and at a time when our community desperately requires them.

Just late last month, St. Mary's laid off 31 people and reduced hours for other employees due to their overwhelming operating losses.

Please consider supporting this effort and helping those within Androscoggin, and our surrounding communities, receive the quality care they require and deserve.

Thank you for your time.

[District 94: Part of Lewiston](#)