

IN SUPPORT OF LD 2237

An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health & Human Services Committee, I'm Jayne Van Bramer, President & CEO of Sweetser and I'm speaking today in support of LD 2237.

First, we deeply appreciate Speaker Talbot Ross for her leadership in bringing this forward. The legislative package before you builds on the good work of the Governor in her supplemental budget and drills down on proven strategies for addressing the mental health needs of Mainers across our state.

As the largest provider of mobile crisis services in our state, we see the benefit of having trained professionals literally meet people where they are at. No matter where a mental health challenge occurs, help should always be there to meet it. In our rural communities, travel could be a barrier to reaching individuals in need. More professionals equals more treatment, support, and greater response time.

As a provider that operates two Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in Brunswick and Sanford, we see the need for having a physical location, a one stop shop for accessing the full range of various behavioral health services. We've seen immense benefit of physically being embedded in service center communities that have issues accessing services and who have increased need. Walk in care for mental health and substance use should be available for all Mainers. Adding more Receiving Centers is one important aspect of building on this success.

The mental health component of this package represents a critical baseline to strengthen and expand access to services across our state.

As this committee continues its good work weighing the various solutions and reforms necessary to strengthen the entire behavioral health system, please consider supporting the Speaker's bill as the vehicle for the legislature's consideration.

Appreciate your time and the important work each of you do for our state.

Happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,



Jayne Van Bramer
President & CEO