

GTS

GALLANT THERAPY SERVICES

Testimony of Gallant Therapy Services

LD 209 An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Neither for nor Against

January 23, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of both the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees.

My name is Ryan Gallant, I am the President of Gallant Therapy Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before the Committee to provide testimony on the supplemental budget.

I am here today to ask for your support to restore and allocate the funding needed for January 1, 2025, MaineCare service rate cost of living adjustments (COLA) in the supplemental budget, *LD 209 An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund, and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025*.

Our company focuses on supporting people with disabilities lead meaningful lives in the community. We have a total of about 130 employees helping people in Kennebec, Androscoggin, Somerset, and Penobscot counties. We have been in operation for 15 years and our vision is to help people live life to the fullest.

We offer community supports, work supports, employment services, assistive technology services, and in-home supports to over 150 adults receiving services through Mainecare sections 21 and 29. In addition, we offer occupational therapy and speech therapy services for over 1000 children.

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As you know staffing for our services tends to be an area that is an area of concern, especially in today's economy and work environment. Our staff are often underpaid for the crucial work that they provide to some of Maine's most vulnerable people. I'm deeply concerned about the recent budgetary suspension of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for MaineCare rates. This decision profoundly impacts Mainers, including those who receive these essential services and the dedicated workers who provide their care and support. The suspension of COLA puts Maine's vital service system at significant risk, especially as the costs of living and minimum wage continue to rise.

This decision creates a significant level of stress on our already fragile system of support. Many of our staff will be forced to leave the caregiver/support field if these COLA's are not implemented, just so they can take care of themselves and their own families. Our team faces these tough decisions already and without the COLA the situation will worsen due to our agency not being able to provide raises to our team.

In addition, the cost to provide services is rising greatly. Just this year we experienced a 24% increase in health insurance premiums, increases in leases, increases in other insurances, the addition of the family paid leave tax, along with many other increases.

I urge you to make restoring the COLA into the budget retroactive to 1/1/25 as a non-negotiable item.

Please restore the January 1, COLA for all MaineCare rates in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Ryan Gallant
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