



February 7, 2025

Testimony Regarding 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

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Erin McMullan, and I am writing in my capacity as the Executive Director of The Maine Psychological Association (MePA). MePA is a non-profit association which represents the 600+ psychologists and psychological examiners in Maine. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting human welfare. Our membership consists of practicing psychologists, academicians, students, retirees, associates and affiliates.

We are writing to urge you to provide adequate funds to sustain—and hopefully grow—the mental and behavioral health network in the State of Maine.

Mental and behavioral health continues to be an area of concern for the people of Maine. According to the Maine Development [Foundation's 2024 Measures of Growth Report](#):

- In 2021-2022, an estimated 33% of Maine children had a diagnosed mental, emotional, and/or behavioral condition such as anxiety, depression, a learning disability, or autism. This was up from 28.9% in 2020-2021 and significantly higher than the U.S. average of 24.5%.
- In 2023, 35% of Maine high schoolers reported feeling sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more. According to the Maine Children's Alliance, "teen mental health is a growing crisis in the state and the nation."
- In July/August 2024, approximately 18% of Maine adults had symptoms of anxiety or depression. An equal percentage of adults nationwide reported these symptoms—up from just 11% in 2019.

Relatedly, Maine continues to see hundreds of drug-related deaths each year, as well as an increase in food and housing insecurity, all of which are directly tied to mental and behavioral health.

With these sobering statistics in mind, we hope that you can prioritize funding in the mental and behavioral health space to ensure that we can continue to grow the network of providers, clinics, and other supports available to the people of Maine.

Kindly,
Erin McMullan, Executive Director