

Thank you to all members of the Health & Human Resources Committee today and for the opportunity to speak today on LD210 as Part of section UU

My name is Glen Cyr and I am the Senior Vice President of North Country Associates for the past 25 years and have been in the long-term care and assisted living and health care industry overall for a total of over 35 years.

Our company owns and operates over 20 health care facilities as north as Van Buren, as west as Jackman, as east as Rockland, and as South as Sanford. We truly represent a slice of Maine thru the entire state. My experiences go far and wide. That is why I don't have hair on my head anymore.

My main focus as part of my presentation today is on

1. The repeal and elimination of two-year rebasing rules for our industry
2. The removal of regional inflation adjustments with the state.
3. Removal or possible removal of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) tied to available funds.

My 1st comments are from the phrase

What is the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome/result.

That is exactly what is happening with this proposal again.

In my 35 years of being in this industry, it amazes me that the Dept. along with some legislative individuals can not understand that our industry are ESSENTIAL SERVICES and we must view it in that light. We are open 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week/ 365 days per year. We do not close due to short staffing, tired employees working large amounts of overtime, or any other excuses. We are there and must be there – no exceptions.

But our residents, they are completely reliant and depend on our hardworking staff. They need us and we must be there for them regardless of the circumstances. There are no alternatives or other options expect less reliable care and quality or closure over a period of time.

Maine has closing health care facilities at a higher rate than the national average and that is well documented.

Not allowing rebasing in a timely fashion of 2 years at a minimum or not realizing that a COLA is the basic minimum. Telling our employees that we do appreciate everything they do is appreciated but we can not provide you with a Cost of Living Increase due to lack of priority funding will lead to the insanity comment I referred to early. Doing the same thing but expected a different result.

Employees will be frustrated, providers are frustrated, and the cycle of individuals leaving their jobs and going to work for 3rd party nursing agencies to get high pay and ADDING to the dependency of 3rd party services will begin to spiral and lead to bigger issues down the road. Or they leave the industry entirely which then creates the ability for the health care facilities still remaining to refuse admissions due to lack of caring staff and then individuals will be backed up in the hospital setting causing even more problems and financial hardship for the state as whole

We just went thru that with the pandemic and we were on the merry go round. We are starting to come off it but a lack of commitment by the state, we are headed right back to past experiences again. Again insanity.

I reported to this committee 2 years ago on the exploding 3rd party nursing labor costs going from \$5 million to \$10 million to \$25 million and then \$40 million. That all happened. The state did step in to provide temporarily financial assistance and we all appreciated that. It was a temporary fix to a huge growing problem. Health Care facilities still closed and patients were displaced – some 2 or 3 times. Short term fixes we understand but it does not make it right.

Rebasing and COLA are not going to completely solve our overall growing health care cost, BUT they WILL get us to hopefully a FLOOR to hopefully help avoid future trends have

we have all experienced. We can't raise our overall rates as Maine care is our biggest payer and Maine care sets the price we are paid and affordability for those who care still pay privately will escalate to rates of \$150,000-\$200,000 -\$250,000 per year or more. That is not sustainable in the long term.

I know the job you have is not easy. You have to balance the wants and the needs of health care costs in Maine. I do not envy you but in all my years of being in Maine, I know we are an essential service for our elderly in Maine. Many of whom have raised their families for 40/50 years. Paid taxes into the state for all those years and now when they need us to help them, we are putting them in a situation of here today and maybe gone tomorrow. The vital caregivers are the key and we must ensure that we do not return to the pandemic times and cause future stress to us. It is about respect and this proposal is not honoring them.

Thank you for your service to Maine in the difficult job you have to do.

If anyone has any questions, I will do my best to answer them.

Glen Cyr
North Country Associates, Inc
LD 210

attached is a copy of my testimony for this hearing which has concluded. I was experiencing technical difficulties at the time of the hearing thank you