

Mary Ellen Dunfield
WELLSPRING - New Horizons Detox Center
LD 514

Thank you all for coming, my name is Mary Ellen Dunfield, I am a Registered Nurse and the Program Director of New Horizons Detox Center in Hampden, Maine. My Center is the most important steppingstone of Wellspring INC whose primary focus is caring for and serving people with substance use disorder diseases. I am writing to you in support of LD 514 and urge the Maine State Legislature to prioritize the need to increase reimbursement rates to support detox facilities.

Medical detoxification in a safe and nurturing environment is essential to helping those struggling with substance use. For many of those people it is a scary process and a sobering admission to themselves when they realize they need help, or they could potentially die. The withdrawal process can be physically and mentally challenging with withdrawal symptoms ranging from mild to life-threatening. Each person that walks through our doors is looking to us for help and support as they go through the process. New Horizons offers a medically managed withdrawal process that provides a safe, controlled environment where clients are cared for by nurses on a 24/7 basis and receive the care and medications they so desperately need. The nurses are dedicated to the clients they serve but it costs money to pay their wages and maintain good retention, the clients need to have healthy and nutritious food to help in their recovery which costs more money than it did a year ago or even 6 months ago. The clients need to have access to the necessary medications which costs money for the facility. Electricity costs to maintain the building has increased as well as fuel costs to heat the building. Medical providers who see the clients need to be compensated accordingly so they can continue their service to the clientele.

New Horizons Detox Center is a not-for-profit facility that relies heavily on State Mainecare funding to ensure that client needs are met, and the client is cared for in a manner that is conducive to their recovery. As of right now the funding that is received per day per client just barely covers half of the cost of what is needed to support each client during their stay.

Without adequate funding detox centers, such as the one I run, will struggle to maintain their current operations, and may be forced to reduce their capacity or even shut down altogether. This will leave vulnerable individuals without access to life saving care and can perpetuate the cycle of addiction and prevent people from getting the care they so desperately need at a critical point in their lives. These individuals could be your mother, father, sister, brother, your best friend, husband, wife, it could even be you or me!

I am urging you to pass LD514 and make the needed funding available to detox facilities. Failure to do so will have devastating and life-threatening consequences for those in need of treatment and will ultimately jeopardize the progress that has been made in addressing the addiction crisis in our state.

Thank you for your time and I trust you will prioritize the well-being of the people and take the necessary steps to support this vital legislation.

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