

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Suzanne Farley and I am the executive director of Wellspring; a non-profit, Mainecare Agency providing residential and outpatient treatment for Substance Use Disorder and Co-occurring mental health needs. We are based out of Bangor but serve people from across the State of Maine.

I am speaking in support of LD514. Wellspring opened New Horizon's Detox Program in January 2018 adding 10 beds to the 15 operated by Milestone at that time. Since then, State investments have brought hope for many people and their families, by adding more detox and treatment beds. Unfortunately, the funding has not kept pace with the cost of delivering services.

In 2024, Wellspring's Mainecare cost-reports showed that it cost \$688/bed/day to deliver detox services. Mainecare currently reimburses at \$403.70/bed /day. This cost differential is compounded by unreliable occupancy rates. Treating this population is not straight forward. In many ways, addiction is a complicated and confounding disease. I've heard it said that "addiction is the only disease that actively tries to convince you that you do not have a disease." A person may wake up in the morning and be ready to change their life, only to find that between the time they call and the time they are scheduled to be admitted, they change their mind. It takes a great deal of courage to step into the process of withdrawal. Despite our staff having medication protocols to make that process more comfortable, the fear of discomfort and change is often too overwhelming and every day we see a number of no-shows. The lack of transportation is also a key barrier to keeping our occupancy rates consistent.

In FY24, our program served 423 people with about a third of those stating that alcohol was their primary substance of choice. Alcohol withdrawal for those in advanced stages of the disease can be life threatening, but our program data notes that most people enter the program with a combination of additional substances on board, such as benzodiazepines which can also increase the risk for adverse outcomes.

Our teams are comprised of contractual medical providers on call 24/7; RN's trained in addiction treatment are on staff 24/7 and highly trained counselors specializing in substance use disorder work 7 days a week. Overall costs, including wages, have continued to creep up as the challenge of finding and keeping competent staff continues. While management works diligently to control costs, the fact remains that we still need to have a minimum number of staff on duty at all times and this, combined with overtime costs add up. Staffing and the rising cost of materials and overhead, compounded by unpredictable occupancy rates requires a sustainable baseline revenue stream in order to maintain continuing operations. I urge you to please support LD514

and bring the Mainecare reimbursement rates for detox up to the NH level of \$594.38.  
Lives are at stake.

Thank you.