

March 10, 2025

### LD 514: Detox Reimbursement rates

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Nick Loscocco, and I am testifying in support of LD 514.

Medically managed withdrawal services (detox) are a vital first step for folks who use drugs and are seeking greater wellness and a beginning to their recovery journey. I am a person in recovery, a Crisis Support Professional, and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug counselor. Although I am testifying in my personal capacity today, I am also currently employed as the Lincoln County OPTIONS Liaison. One of my primary responsibilities in this role is to assist individuals with treatment navigation to meet their immediate needs and this often begins with detox.

As a substance use clinician, my most frequently used assessment tool is the American Society of Addiction Medicine Level of Care (ASAM LOC) Assessment. When making a level of care determination based on this standardized assessment, I look first at medical needs, and the potential for withdrawal symptoms that may require medical attention. It can be extremely dangerous for folks to go through acute detoxification from substances without medical monitoring and attention. Therefore, the first step of accessing treatment for many folks who find themselves substance-dependent must be medically managed withdrawal.

As you are all likely aware, the cost of maintaining a facility suitable for providing this service is very high and requires myriad moving parts to maintain an ethically sufficient standard of care. I'm sure you will hear other testimony from representatives of some of these facilities highlighting their needs for maintaining their operations so I will not speak in specifics here. I will say, that from the perspective of a person assisting in referrals to inpatient detox facilities- I do this multiple times per week-, the financial burden for clients remains a significant barrier to treatment across the board.

Persons with private insurance policies which reimburse at close to double what Maine Care does for medically managed withdrawal have a far easier time access this much needed first step to their recovery.

With current Maine Care detox reimbursement rates below that of comparable states such as New Hampshire, and well below the costs associated with maintaining these facilities, all of the strides that this legislature, the governor's office, and the recovery community have made in recent years to increase the availability of medically managed withdrawal services in Maine, may soon go to waste. We are finally seeing significant positive outcomes from our work in recent years (ie. Reduced overdose deaths, increased access to treatment), and we must continue to support these efforts with the funds necessary to support and maintain these recovery services.

Thank you so much for your time today, and thank you for you ongoing support of our community's goals.

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