

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Sara Gagné-Holmes  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Aging and Disability Services  
11 State House Station  
41 Anthony Avenue  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel; (207) 287-9200; Toll Free: (800) 262-2232  
Fax (Disability) (207) 287-9915; Fax (Aging) (207) 287-9229  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

March 14, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Chair  
Representative Meyer, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 815 – *An Act to Provide Funding for Respite Care and Supplemental Services Provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide information neither for nor against LD 815, *An Act to Provide Funding for Respite Care and Supplemental Services Provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program*.

This bill allocates \$2.25 million each year from the General Fund to supplement funding for respite care and related services administered by the Area Agencies on Aging. This amount mirrors the one-time funding designated for grants during the two-year Respite for ME pilot program, authorized as part of Governor Mills' Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan. This bill would replace one time federal grant funding with General Fund dollars to keep the Respite for ME pilot program funded at the current levels. The Department is not opposed to doing this, however, the need to increase General Fund dollars for this program is unsustainable at this time.

Currently, a total of \$854,000 in state and federal funds is budgeted annually for respite care and related services for family caregivers of older adults and older relative caregivers in Maine. Based on the positive [evaluation](#) of Respite for ME, the Department has proposed a related bill sponsored by Representative Cloutier (LD 709) that proposes to repeal and replace the existing statutory authority to adopt the name and features of the Respite for ME program, and streamline administration by aligning state and federal requirements. The evaluation indicated that caregiver burden and stress were significantly reduced, and we know from related research that individuals living with families willing to provide care are less likely to require admission to long-term care facilities. The needs of family caregivers and older relative caregivers were also highlighted in the [2024 State Plan on Aging Needs Assessment](#).

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul Saucier".

Paul Saucier, Director  
Office of Aging and Disability Services

Maine Department of Health and Human Services