



Testimony of Laura Cordes
In Support of
LD 623 An Act to Enhance Support Services for Individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 18, 2025

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of *LD 623 An Act to Enhance Support Services for Individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury*.

My name is Laura Cordes. I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP). MACSP represents nearly one hundred agencies that deliver person-centered educational, vocational, residential, and community supports, as well as specialized services and care to a diverse population of Maine children and adults who have either intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or brain injuries, so that they may live full and meaningful lives in the community.

MACSP supports LD 623 as it recognizes the critical role of caregivers and equips them with the necessary education, training, and resources to provide support to individuals with brain injury, and co-occurring substance use disorders. Additionally, the bill strengthens partnerships between community-based brain injury providers while ensuring that services are responsive to the unique needs of Maine residents and increases opportunities for accessing federal TBI grant funds.

This bill recognizes the vital role that caregivers play and provides them with the necessary education, training, and resources to employ the OADS-supported innovative brain injury screening tool – the Online Brain Injury Screening and Support System (OBISSS). This tool is now available to any organization supporting individuals with co-occurring brain injury and mental health and/or substance use disorder.

By strengthening partnerships between dedicated community-based brain injury provider organizations, many of them member organizations of MACSP, LD 623 expands access to critical services such as access to an online brain injury screening and support system, and solidifies collaboration with the department on federal brain injury state partnership grants.

By requiring contracted brain injury organizations to be based in Maine or have an in-state affiliate directed by individuals with ABIs and their families, this legislation ensures that support services are responsive to the unique needs of Maine residents. This Bill would encourage access to community-based brain injury screening and federal TBI grant funds. It also fosters collaboration between local and national experts, improving service delivery and advocacy efforts.

LD 623 aligns with national efforts by CMS and the American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM) to better address the co-occurring and chronic health needs of individuals with ABIs. CMS has recently designated traumatic

brain injury (TBI) as a chronic health condition and ASAM has approved a new criterion for “neurologic-informed care”, that emphasizes that substance use disorder treatment providers need to be aware of potential cognitive impairments and adjust their approach to treatment accordingly. No new resources are needed at this time to continue efforts to align with national best practices and codify the importance of brain injury screening in the current statute.

I urge this committee to support LD 623 and help improve the lives of countless Mainers affected by ABIs.

Laura Cordes

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