

March 31, 2025

100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony To Support the House Bill LD 977: Resolve, Requiring the Maine Health Data Organization to Develop a Plan for Measuring Gaps in Home and Community-based Services.

Dear Representative Cluchey and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Roseanna Belanger, I live in Presque Isle and I am a person with a disability. I am also a member of Speaking Up for Us and the current Chair of the Board of Directors. I am here today to testify in support of LD 977 because this bill directly impacts the services I receive and the challenges I face due to gaps in home and community-based support.

A few years ago, I had access to home and community support services that made a significant difference in my daily life. These services helped me manage my home, provided essential reminders, and allowed me to participate in my community. However, over time, the hours of support I received were reduced until I eventually lost them entirely. The loss of these services has affected not only me but many other individuals with disabilities in my area, particularly in Presque Isle and Aroostook County. The reduction in support services has left many people struggling to maintain independence and participate in their communities.

LD 977 is important to me because it acknowledges and seeks to measure the gap between authorized and delivered services. By collecting and analyzing data, this bill ensures that policymakers can make informed decisions to address these service gaps. If this bill is enacted, I hope it will lead to the restoration of crucial services for myself and others who have lost support.

This bill will help people with disabilities regain access to essential home and community-based services, allowing them to live independently and engage with their communities. Without these services, many individuals, including myself, are left without the necessary support to complete daily tasks, travel to essential locations, and maintain our quality of life.

Transportation is another critical factor in accessing community support. My support workers used to help me get from one place to another, which was especially important in the winter when walking or biking is not a viable option. Without reliable transportation services, I face significant barriers in reaching essential destinations like the grocery store, medical appointments, and social activities.

I urge you to support LD 977 so that data on these service gaps can be properly measured and addressed. Ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the services they are authorized to receive is essential for maintaining independence and quality of life.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am available to answer any questions by email.

Sincerely,
Roseanna Belanger

Speaking Up for Us Board Chair