

Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine

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

April 1, 2025

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

My name is Sara Ratcliffe, and I serve as Executive Director of the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine.

The Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine is a network of home care, hospice, and personal care providers across our State delivering in-home care to older adults and disabled individuals of all ages, allowing them to stay in their homes and communities.

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 977, a crucial piece of legislation that aims to address the pressing issue of gaps in home and community-based services across our state. The demand for home and community based services is high, and we know that need are going unmet. It is imperative that we understand the scope of unmet needs in our communities so we can make a plan to scale up services.

Unfortunately, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not currently collect data on unmet service needs for home care. For instance, our members deliver home-based services under MaineCare Sec. 19 and 96. DHHS does not maintain waitlists for either of these sections, so while we know that many across the state are waiting for services, we lack reliable data on the scope of the issue. This lack of data hinders our ability to identify areas where resources are needed most, making it challenging to allocate resources effectively and ensure that Mainers receive the care they deserve.

LD 977 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Maine Health Data Organization to develop a plan for annual measurements of the gap between authorized care and the services actually provided for home and community-based services under the MaineCare program, state-funded programs, and the forthcoming lifespan program. This plan will utilize existing data, and the Department of Health and Human Services will be required to provide data to the Maine Health Data Organization upon request.

By supporting LD 977, we can gain a deeper understanding of the gaps in home care services being provided across our state. This knowledge will enable us to make informed decisions about resource allocation, policy interventions, and program development. If this

data is paired with other strategies, including implementing adequate reimbursement rates and workforce attraction and retention efforts, we will make progress toward achieving better outcomes for Mainers who rely on these services.

I urge you to support LD 977 and take a critical step towards ensuring that our state's home and community-based services meet the needs of our citizens. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Ratcliffe

Executive Director

Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine