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Brewer
LD 1239

Testimony in Support of LD [Bill Number, if known]

An Act to Require Data Collection on and Reporting of Psychiatric Hospital Resources and Transparency in Denials of Emergency Involuntary Admissions to Psychiatric Hospitals

Submitted by Jason Goodrich

My name is Jason Goodrich. I live in Brewer, and I work on the front lines of homelessness outreach and mental health crisis response here in Bangor. I'm here today to voice my strong support for this bill because I have seen, too many times, what happens when someone in psychiatric crisis is denied the care they urgently need—without explanation, without clarity, and without options.

This bill addresses an issue that's not abstract or bureaucratic—it's personal. It's about human beings in their most vulnerable moments being told: "We can't help you. Try somewhere else." And it's about the professionals and service providers who are left scrambling, blindfolded, trying to find a hospital bed that may or may not exist.

What this bill does is simple and overdue:

- It requires psychiatric hospitals to explain their decisions when they turn someone away.
- It provides daily, real-time data on available psychiatric beds, so we aren't making critical decisions in the dark.
- It gathers statewide, long-term data so we can finally identify the gaps in our mental health system—and fix them.

These are not just procedural changes. They are acts of accountability, clarity, and compassion.

We know that Maine is in a behavioral health crisis. Emergency departments are overwhelmed. Mobile crisis units are under-resourced. And psychiatric hospitals often have to make difficult decisions about admissions. But right now, the system offers no transparency when those decisions leave someone untreated, unsafe, and often unhoused.

This bill doesn't solve every problem. But it shines a light on a process that is currently too opaque. It gives families, providers, and patients a roadmap—where today there is only a dead end.

And when a person is denied admission, this bill ensures there's a record—a story, a why, and maybe a path forward.

I urge you to support this bill. It doesn't just help systems—it helps people. And right now, people are falling through the cracks. We need a system that doesn't just count beds, but accounts for every person who needs one.

Thank you. - Jason Goodrich