



72B Main Street, Winthrop, ME 04364  
Phone: 207.377.9603 or 1.800.273.5200  
Fax: 207.377.9434  
Email: [asm@asmonline.org](mailto:asm@asmonline.org)  
Web: [www.asmonline.org](http://www.asmonline.org)

Written Testimony for LD 1745

Dear Representative Representative Gramlich, Senator Moore and the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is David Sharp and I am testifying on behalf of the Autism Society of Maine (ASM) Board of Directors. I am testifying in favor of LD 1745: An Act to Stabilize Residential Treatment Capacity for Children and Youth in Maine

I am writing in favor of passing LD 1745 due to the stark rise in need for residential services and the corresponding decrease in the availability of residential services due to closures.

A key aspect of this legislation is the requirement for the "Department of Health and Human Services to convene a stakeholder group of child residential treatment providers to identify the short-term and long-term staffing and resources needs to ensure the sustainability of child residential treatment providers and report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters." This will be vital in the efforts to provided stabilized resources throughout the state to ensure that our most vulnerable youth receive the mental and behavioral health care that they are in desperate need of.

According to the [State of Maine Children's Residential Care Facility \(CRCF\) Grid](#), there are a total of 155 residential beds available in the entire state across 13 facilities. With such a low number of total beds available it puts an incredible strain on the emergency room departments of hospitals statewide. Additionally, the only facility that specifically lists serving youth with Autism is the Spurwink location in Westbrook. It is imperative that the state do everything in its power to prevent the closure of any of these locations and also works towards increasing the number of facilities that serves not just youth with developmental disabilities but all youth.

After October 1, 2025, the department shall notify the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters whenever a children's residential care facility ceases to operate no later than 2 weeks after the facility has ceased operations. The notification to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters must include information about the facility, including but not limited to the name of the facility, the services provided, the number of beds, the number of employees, the stated reasons for closure and a de-identified summary of the transition and discharge plan for the children who were in the facility at the time of closure. The notification must also include a description of any actions taken by the department to prevent the closure.

In order to adequately serve the youth of The State of Maine, this bill must be passed so that the Legislature can be informed timely of any potential closures to a facility, identify short and long term budgetary needs and costs. Hopefully with the detailed information in a timely manner The State of Maine can not only prevent closures but also increase the number of residential facilities for our youth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Sharp

Board of Directors  
Autism Society of Maine