



**Maine Medical
Association**



Testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**In SUPPORT of LD 1745, An Act to Stabilize Residential Treatment Capacity
for Children and Youth in Maine**

**Health and Human Services Committee
April 28, 2025**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP). We are in support of LD 1745, which would be a step forward in addressing the lack of stable residential care facilities for children and adolescents in Maine with mental and behavioral health disorders, and developmental disabilities.

The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

Maine is facing a crisis: children's residential care facilities are closing in droves due to chronic underfunding, workforce challenges, and a system stretched beyond its limits. In September 2024, it was reported that over the course of 5 years, Maine lost [152 beds](#) for children with mental and behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities.

As a result, far too many children and adolescents in Maine are left without access to appropriate residential treatment when they need it most. Some are sent out of state, far from their families and

support systems. Others wait for days or weeks in emergency departments, or remain in homes that are unable to safely meet their needs, all while the state of their mental, behavioral, and sometimes physical health deteriorates.

LD 1745 includes a few different components aimed at gaining insight into these underlying issues, and exploring possible solutions to ensure that Maine youth receive the care they need in a timely manner and without having to risk their safety. For instance, the bill proposes to convene a stakeholder group to identify the short-term and long-term staffing needs and resources needed to ensure sustainable residential care facilities. It also requires an assessment of the costs associated with children staying in hospitals for long periods and out-of-state placements.

When a child is experiencing a level of distress or need that cannot be met in the home, community, or emergency department setting, we must be ready with options that are appropriate, accessible, and available. LD 1745 is an important step forward in creating a more sustainable system that addresses the issues causing closures of residential care facilities, and ensures that youth receive the care they need.

We urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1745, An Act to Stabilize Residential Treatment Capacity for Children and Youth in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses
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