



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and esteemed members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify **in support of LD 2074, An Act to Update the Requirements for Social Worker Licensure.**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators and state government with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

Maine's shortage of community mental health providers is a major barrier to our community members receiving care. Specifically, those accessing services through MaineCare continually face long waitlists, leaving them unable to get sufficient care for their recovery. Accessing a provider is essential for peers to remain out of crisis, housed, and employed. As can be seen by the critical shortage of providers currently in Maine, emergency room visits and law enforcement involvement are among the costly and traumatic outcomes of individuals not receiving proper care.

The variety of services provided by licensed social workers in Maine cannot be overstated. From therapy to case management and wraparound support, there are an abundance of roles to be filled in our communities, and updating licensure requirements is a step in the right direction to addressing the most crucial of needs for our peers. Tackling barriers to career development will inherently lead to more effective and professional providers.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to vote **ought to pass on LD 2074.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Simonne M. Maline

Executive Director