



**LD 2065 An Act to Provide One-time Funds to Support the Construction of a
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for
At-risk Youth
Testimony in Support
January 29, 2026**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN, I am the Vice President of Government Relations for Northern Light Health. I am here today speaking in support of this bill on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with nearly 10,000 employees statewide.

The challenged of long stay youth in hospital emergency departments awaiting discharge to community-based services is an ongoing challenge. A challenge that I and my hospital colleagues have spoken about for many years. Hospital emergency departments report data to DHHS on long stay emergency department youth on a monthly basis. For calendar year 2025, Northern Light Health hospitals had 153 youth in our emergency departments for longer than 48 hours. The average length of stay in one of our emergency departments was 5.6 days with the longest length of stay at 29 days. The data also documents that the challenges continue to impact large and small hospital emergency departments, Northern Light Health hospitals with the highest volume of youth in the ED includes Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (88), Mayo Hospital in Dover Foxcroft (27) and AR Gould Hospital in Presque Isle (17).

The bill before you today allocates \$1.1 million dollars in funding to establish a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for youth. As you are aware Maine does not have a PTRF facility, thus all youth in need of this level of care are sent to facilities out of state. Many of these youth wait in hospital emergency departments for discharge out of state. It is our understanding that the original allocation of \$2 million dollars to fund the facility costs is short of what is needed thus the bill before you today to resource completing the facility build out. We strongly support this appropriation.

Establishing a PTRF for behavioral health youth in Maine has been a long policy journey bringing the department, committee members and providers of service in alignment to address this critical need. We ask that you support this important legislation

Thank you

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Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Northern Light Pharmacy
Sebasticook Valley Hospital