



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine *The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

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Testimony in Support of

An Act to Regulate the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Providing Certain Mental Health Services and An Act to Regulate and Prevent Children's Access to Artificial Intelligence Chatbots with Human-like Features and Social Artificial Intelligence Companions – LDs 2082 and 2162

February 17, 2026

Good morning, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services. My name is Adam Bloom-Paicopolos. I am a resident of Wells and am proud to serve as the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine (the Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association representing 34 of Maine's community-based behavioral health agencies who provide mental health and substance use services to over 120,000 children, adults, and families annually. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

The Alliance strongly supports both pieces of legislation put forward by Representatives Kuhn and Gramlich to address the dangerous and concerning trend of artificial intelligence (AI) replacing human therapy.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly entering the mental health space. AI-powered therapy apps, chatbots, and session-recording tools are proliferating—often marketed directly to consumers and children and deployed with little regulatory oversight. At the same time, Maine is facing an unprecedented behavioral health workforce shortage, and federal cuts under H.R. 1 threaten to strip coverage from tens of thousands of Mainers, creating pressure to find lower-cost alternatives to human-delivered care. In this environment, the temptation to substitute AI for licensed professionals will only grow.

These bills do not reject technology. They embrace it—responsibly. These bills establish clear, common-sense frameworks that allows licensed professionals to use AI as a tool for administrative support while ensuring it never replaces the therapeutic relationship for children or adults. That distinction is critical. The therapeutic alliance between a client and their clinician is the foundation of effective mental health

People seeking mental health and substance use disorder treatment are in a uniquely vulnerable position. They share deeply personal information in the expectation that they are communicating with a trained, licensed human being who is bound by professional and ethical obligations. AI systems cannot replicate clinical judgment, empathy, or the nuanced understanding required for safe and effective therapeutic care. Without guardrails, there is a real risk that consumers, particularly those who cannot afford traditional therapy, are children, or who live in underserved areas, will be steered toward AI-only services that may cause harm.

LD 2082 and 2162 both strike the right balance. They do not ban AI in behavioral health. They do not stifle innovation. What they do is establish the principle that

therapy is a human relationship, and that AI can assist licensed professionals and their clients but never replace them. At a time when federal policy is pushing more people out of the healthcare system and creating pressure to cut costs at the expense of quality, these bills is an important safeguard for the people of Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Bloom-Paicopolos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Adam Bloom-Paicopolos, MPP
Executive Director