



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

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Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

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 619 " An Act to Ensure Coordination of Care for MaineCare Members"**.

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 with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

Anything the Legislature can do to support the transportation system for MaineCare members, the CCSM wholeheartedly supports. Lack of access to transportation is most often the number one topic of discussion at our local councils and forums that we convene on a regular basis. Your constituents can give you numerous stories of how the system is not working for so many, making it impossible to access needed services on a regular basis. While we support transportation to clubhouses, I would be remiss in not mentioning that Maine does not provide transportation to mental health peer recovery centers. These are two very different programs. This issue of lack of transportation to peer recovery centers is brought up all the time as well. The reason transportation is not covered is because DHHS does not fund peer recovery centers of any kind whether mental health or SUD with MaineCare dollars. This leaves people ineligible for transportation through the brokerage system. We would love to see this issue rectified in some way as this is one of the lowest barrier services that people can access. Lack of access to transportation keeps them away from recovery centers. We need to fix this!

Care coordination is another important piece of the many healthcare system gaps. Imagine that you are in the hospital getting ready to be discharged and your case manager, the person who may know you the best, is not allowed to participate in the discharge planning process because it is not a billable service. In the new model of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) coming to Maine in 2024, this will be a covered service. We need to remedy these inconsistencies in care coordination for all who receive mental health services, no matter the program type.

In Section 5 of the bill text there is language for billable recovery coaching and peer support services. For mental health peers, this has been a topic of conversation for years in Maine (as well as nationally). There is a spectrum of opinions about billable peer support that we want to honor. The vast majority support some version of this but there are some who feel that when you move into the insurance realm, you lose some of the fidelity of what is offered in this service. We would love to bring peers together with policy makers to discuss where peer support is most needed and could lend itself to a billable service and some that do not, for example the Intentional Warm Line. It would be very important to involve the Intentional Peer Support Advisory Committee (IPSAC), who advises OBH on all things related to the Intentional Peer



Support Programming in Maine as well as other groups and individuals. We would like to see the State of Maine fully embrace this conversation and move forward initiatives to support this important work. Unfortunately, these important conversations have moved in fits and starts depending on different administrations and priorities.

In closing we would like to see the initiatives put forth in this bill achieve better outcomes in coordination of care for members of our peer community. Therefore, we ask that you vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 619 while taking into consideration the items we have brought to your attention that need remediation.

Sincerely,

Simonne M Maline

Executive Director
