



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

17 March 2023

Testimony in support of LD 659, An Act to Promote Seamless and Flexible Home and Community Supports Across the Lifespan for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or Autism

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and the distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Rachel Dyer, and I am the associate director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating for individuals with developmental disabilities for over 50 years. The DD Council is a federally funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated, and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.

Conceptually, the "Lifespan waiver" makes a lot of sense. It proposes to offer a wide variety of and flexibility in services. It proposes to address some of the shortcomings of the current service delivery system, especially those around the transition into adulthood and potentially those experienced later in adulthood and the lack of a needs assessment that determines the level services one is eligible for. It provides an opportunity to promote service outcomes (quality) rather than delivery (quantity) and to address longstanding disparities in access to services.

There are a potential problems with the change to a lifespan waiver, including but not limited to OADS's capacity to effectively administer a new, hugely complicated menu of services, user understanding of and trust in changes to the current system.

Thus far, MDCC has been impressed with OADS's approach to developing this service, including its engagement of stakeholders. Should this be approved, perhaps the HHS Committee would consider requesting an update next year on the project and process from the involved members of the DD community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.