



**Testimony of Andy Taranko, MACSP Board President,
Maine Director, Living Innovations, a service of Mosaic**

**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***

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 20, 2023**

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

My name is Andy Taranko. I am the President of the Board of Directors for the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP). I am also the Maine Director for Living Innovations, a non-profit agency with 15 offices serving children and adults with IDD and Autism in all 16 counties. I have been providing services to Mainers with disabilities for the past 25 years.

MACSP is the statewide association of 85 individual, mission driven agencies providing person centered and individualized educational, vocational, residential and community supports, as well as specialized services and care to thousands of Maine's children and adults who have either intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or brain injuries, so that they may live full and meaningful lives in the community.

We see great promise in developing a Lifespan Waiver to provide flexible supports and services for the thousands of Mainers with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder in our state.

We especially appreciate the coordination between the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) and the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and the consideration that is being given to streamline entry into the adult system and to eliminate the longstanding "cliff" and waiting period that young adults with disabilities and their families face when aging out of the children's service system in hopes of accessing services in the adult system.

While the new Lifespan program will not eliminate the current waitlists, essentially the waitlists from 21 and 29 will move to the Lifespan program in 2025, increasing the potential for some of the newly imagined services to be available to people more quickly.

Section 2 of the bill notes that when the Lifespan program opens for phase 1 enrollment, new enrollment under Sections 21 and 29 will be closed. Upwards of 6,000 adults are supported with employment, community and residential supports including in-home, group home and shared living residential services in the current system. It is anticipated that Section 13 Targeted Case Management service will be redesigned as a function of this proposed Lifespan program as well.

I serve on the Department's Lifespan Stakeholder Advisory Group, outlined in Section 4 of the bill, which has already launched. At this early stage we simply do not know how current services will ultimately be designed, redesigned, or eliminated. What we foresee is that in under two years the Department will be creating a whole new array of services, some that have never been provided in Maine. Along with the practical matter of filing a new federal waiver, and updating subsequent MaineCare rules, new services will need to be aligned with MIHMS (Maine's Medicaid billing system), and a process for determining how to sunset the current section 21 and 29 waivers needs to be created. The Department will also be managing rate determinations, new Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessments for people with disabilities and new licensures for agencies that this committee is considering under LD 449.

Given the significant amount of change underway in a short timeframe, it will be essential that all stakeholders understand the new services before they are launched. Written information, such as draft definitions and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about each new service for all stakeholders should be readily available. As providers, we will also need time to build or adjust programs to be in place that meet new guidelines.

One of our deepest concerns is maintaining the care and support of adults with the highest most complex medical and behavior needs who do not transfer to the new system or would like to but are unsure of how their needs would be met. A clear continuum of care needs to be spelled out and those with complex needs considered along the way.

In order to ensure access to the services as intended, we strongly encourage that rules related to the creation of services under the Lifespan Program waiver be major substantive. We believe that due to all the complexities and considerations needed in developing a new system of care, it is necessary to ensure that a well-informed and deliberate process is followed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Taranko

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