

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Stephanie Moores and I lived in Millbridge, Maine.

I am here today to share my experience with the AMHC Sexual Assault services. I have used these services many times over the years as I am a foster parent and encounter children in my care that have been abused.

The time, attention, and care that have been given to myself and my children over the years has been phenomenal. Jodi has been our main contact, and I really do not know what we would have done without her. We have had phone calls, home visits, court support, guidance to appropriate resources, and so much more.

Time was spent getting to know my children and family. They took the time to make us feel seen and heard. They were patient and built a trust that comes from consistency and showing up.

When you or your child has been assaulted, it is extremely hard. There are so many emotions. Anger, frustration, fear, sadness, and loneliness. You feel that you are the only one. You wonder why me? Why now? How could someone possibly do this? But the support through AMHC and their advocates, especially Jodi, made everything seem doable, that we could make it through and be stronger because of it.

Day or night someone is there to talk. No one knows when they will be triggered. No one knows when they will cross paths with their abuser. Just knowing there is someone who understands and is knowledgeable and ready to talk means so much.

These advocates are on the front lines. They are trauma informed, traveling throughout Washington and Hancock counties every day. They see and hear unspeakable things and encounter nightmare situations. Yet, they remain calm and professional and continue to show up; giving the care, empathy, and support that is so needed among some of the most vulnerable in our population.

These services are desperately needed across the state. To maintain and recruit competent, trauma-informed professionals, a living wage must be provided. To build trust you need to be consistent. Paying a living wage helps ensure that those that start the work stay with it and continue on, not just become burnt out and move on to a higher paying position with less stress.

The AMHC Sexual Assault advocates have been an invaluable service to myself and my family. Thank you for hearing from me today, and I am happy to answer any questions.