



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 LD 199

"An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program"

Sponsored by Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross

March 28, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committees. My name is Malory Shaughnessy and I am the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's community based mental health and substance use treatment providers, providing services to over 80,000 Maine men, women, and children. 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.

On behalf of the Alliance, I am here today to speak in support of LD 199, "An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program." This bill provides MaineCare program coverage for noncitizen residents of this State 21 years of age or older with qualifying low incomes who are ineligible for federal Medicaid due to immigration status.

MaineCare should cover everyone with low income - no exceptions, no exclusions. **All Means All.** However, many Mainers are unjustly excluded from MaineCare due to their immigration status and must choose between their health and other basic needs like food and shelter. All means All.

I'd also like to focus on Maine's workforce. We can all agree that Maine's economic future depends on attracting a skilled workforce to the state, and **Maine's immigrants are an important part of that future.** We know that access to health care also means access to behavioral health care. Immigrants have often experienced unspeakable trauma. But their experiences do not need to block them from leading healthy successful lives. When we can ensure people get the mental health supports they need, we ensure their access to a stronger financial future – for themselves and their children.

We also know that healthy children need healthy parents – both physically and emotionally. Access to MaineCare-covered behavioral health treatment is vitally important for the health of a family. All means All. No one is immune to behavioral health challenges.

I thank you for your time today and I urge members to vote ought to pass on this important proposal. A vote for this proposal is a vote for healthy families. And it's a vote that shows you also believe that All means All. Happy to answer any questions you have for me.