

IN SUPPORT OF LD 435
***Resolve to Ensure the Provision of Medically Necessary
Behavioral Health Care Services for Children in Their Homes and
Communities***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I'm Jayne Van Bramer, President & CEO of Sweetser and I'm here today to testify in support of LD 435, a *Resolve to Ensure the Provision of Medically Necessary Behavioral Health Care Services for Children in Their Homes and Communities*.

We would like to thank the bill's sponsor, Rep. Lori Gramlich for her continued leadership championing our behavioral health system.

This bill is about building on the progress being made this session to ensure every child and family have the necessary treatment, hope, and support they need within our own state. Alongside the critical investments in behavioral health in the budget, this will ensure we have a strategic plan in place to coordinate the continued enhancement of our entire system.

Nearly 70 children are being treated out of state as you've heard from testimony on other bills. We can and want to treat them here in Maine. We want to bring these children home.

In order to do so, there are a number of key supports that have to be place that center around the type of specialized care needed for those with higher acuity and more significant challenges. By working with the provider community, I know the department shares our same goal of making sure the full continuum of care is provided from home-based services, community-based care, to secure and safe treatment environments for those youth too dysregulated to function in an open-door residential setting.

Keeping kids safe from harming themselves, other children, and from those providing their care and treatment must be a vital component of any future planning process.

This is not about developing a plan for it to simply sit on the shelf to collect dust. This is about taking bold leadership and action now to address the growing issue of our youth needing services in our own state in order to be close to friends, family and their network of supports. This is about maximizing our resources and limiting the use of expensive out of state options for treating our youth.

I appreciate your time and the important work this committee is doing for our behavioral health system. I urge this committee to pass Rep. Gramlich's LD 435. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jayne Van Bramer
President & CEO