



**Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine**  
*The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*  
Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

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**Testimony in Support of LD 435**  
**" Resolve, to Ensure the Provision of Medically Necessary  
Behavioral Health Care Services for Children in Their Homes and  
Communities"**

**Sponsored by Representative Lori Gramlich**  
March 29, 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 435, Resolve, to Ensure the Provision of Medically Necessary Behavioral Health Care Services for Children in Their Homes and Communities." This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a plan to ensure that medically necessary home-based and community-based behavioral health care services are available in the scope, intensity and duration necessary to meet the needs of children and their families in the State. It directs the department to submit the plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than October 1, 2023.

A year ago, I stood before this committee and reminded you that in the 129th legislature, LD 984 was brought forward by Representative Gramlich and was voted out of this committee with a unanimous "Ought to Pass as Amended." The amendment was very simple:

**"Resolved: That the Department of Health and Human Services through its case managers shall coordinate with families of children who are receiving residential treatment services for behavioral health issues out of state to develop plans to bring the children back to the State to receive the required services."**

The House and Senate read and approved the bill on May 29th, and the Governor signed it on June 6th of 2019. That was 1,391 days ago. Maine children in need, and their families, are still waiting. That is why Representative Gramlich has come forward again with the proposal in front of you today.

Every day that a child does not get the support and the services they need makes their long-term prognosis worse. Every day that a child cannot see their parents or connect with their family makes that child a little bit more detached.

It has been almost 1400 days since you passed a resolution that instructed the department to "negotiate reimbursement rates as necessary to find providers" to return children to the State and their families.

Please tell the department that within 30 days after this legislation takes effect, you want to see a plan for implementing the Resolve signed by the Governor. The Department needs to clearly lay out what it would take to expand home and community treatment to end the waitlists, what it would take to provide funding to providers and their staff to be able to open up some of the closed beds, what it would take to retrofit a few residential homes to the more secure environment that some of these youth need to be safe from harming themselves or others. You would only be asking for a plan to do this work.

I urge committee members to vote ought to pass on this proposal. I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me and to bring any other information you need for the work session on this bill.