



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

Testimony in Support of LD 907

"An Act to Meet the Needs of Individuals with Severe Behavioral Health Diagnoses"

Sponsored by Representative Holly Stover
March 29, 2023

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Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and 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 907, "An Act to Meet the Needs of Individuals with Severe Behavioral Health Diagnoses."

This bill would appropriate funding to allow the department to provide the additional support and wrap around services that some individual clients, both adult and child, need to meet their safety and therapeutic needs. Our reading of the concept draft is that this funding would be available for special staffing and added services provided both in a client's home or within residential facilities in which they may be residing. This is critically needed funding.

Since the state began the policy of "no eject, no reject" within adult mental health residential services, we have had a struggle to seek and receive funding for the appropriate add on level of staffing and services some clients need to be safe and supported, and to assure the safety of all residents within a facility. Facilities are not allowed to reject a referral without the approval of the department, yet sometimes the referral both places staff and other residents in danger, and the service needs of the referred cannot be met. And the additional funding to make the placement more successful is not forthcoming.

Please vote ought to pass on the creation of this fund to be used to meet the more complex needs of some children and adults with severe behavioral health diagnoses whose needs are not being met by current state programs.