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Testimony of Director Sarah Squirrell
Office of Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services
Before the Health and Human Services Committee

Neither For Nor Against to LD 472
An Act to Support Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Projects

April 5, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Squirrell and I am the Director of the Office of Behavioral Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information for your deliberations on LD 472, *An Act to Support Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Projects*. The Department is grateful to Representatives Madigan, Lemelin, Shagoury and White, as well as yourself, Senator Baldacci, and Senator LaFountain, for your support of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) grantees. We appreciate the commitment to supporting this transition and continuity of behavioral healthcare to the people served by these provider sites.

LD 472 seeks to provide \$4 million for one-time funding as a bridge for mental health organizations participating in federally funded CCBHC projects that end prior to July 2024. The Department is supportive of the CCBHC grant awards provided by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to fund behavioral health providers to hire staff and implement activities such as peer services, training and supervision, care coordination, and expanded call center staff to build the infrastructure needed prior to the implementation of Maine's CCBHC rate structure.

There are currently two behavioral health organizations who have SAMHSA-funded CCBHC projects, currently funded at \$2 million per year, that are expected to end in the fall of 2023 and have been ineligible to date for continued grant funding to sustain their CCBHC activities. It is important to note that the most recent SAMHSA CCBHC grants funded projects at \$1 million per year, a 50% reduction in previous years awards. Given this change in funding for future SAMHSA CCBHC grantees, the Department does not support funding providers to the same amount as they received in initial SAMSHA grants (i.e., \$2 million per year) to ensure equity among currently-funded Maine SAMHSA CCBHC grantees. Funding for these activities at or below the current 2022 SAMSHA awards, \$1 million per year, for any grantee that does not have further funding after the end of their grant cycle could provide a stabilizing bridge to the implementation of Maine's CCBHC rate structure.

Additionally, SAMHSA has been consistent in providing grant opportunities to CCBHC clinics, with the potential for another round of grants in March 2023 for which current providers may be eligible. If this new funding opportunity is released and the at-risk providers are awarded, state funding would not be required to sustain CCBHC activities.

The Department recognizes that these providers are important partners in informing the development of Maine's CCBHC model. The Department's CCBHC development team meets monthly with these providers to identify efficacy of evidence-based practices, methods for service delivery, and testing of model components that work best for the populations they serve. The Department's only concern related to this bill is the need for General Funds.

Thank you for your time and consideration.