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# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Suzanne Salisbury in support of*  
**LD 997, Resolve, to Reduce Workforce Barriers for Mental Health Professionals in Maine**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Sue Salisbury. I represent House District 128, which is part of the town of Westbrook. I am here today to introduce **LD 997, Resolve, to Reduce Workforce Barriers for Mental Health Professionals in Maine.**

This bill was presented last session and was voted unanimously out of this committee but unfortunately died on the appropriations table. The bill was the result of conversations related to workforce shortages in the mental health care field. Those conversations included proposals to address barriers to folks entering the profession, this resolve would implement some of those proposals.

LD 977 would change the educational requirements for behavioral health professionals providing services for children, regardless of the setting in which the service is provided, to require a minimum of 60 credit hours in a related field, 90 credit hours in an unrelated field or a high school diploma with a plan for supervision and training. The same changes to the educational requirements apply for a behavioral health professional to be eligible to receive training to provide specialized services.

The resolve also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to amend or establish contracts for training behavioral health professionals to train any number of additional individuals and authorizes the department to opt to charge individuals or their employer's fees for training.

I have recently learned that there are some concerns by the University of Maine system and DHHS. I currently have a proposed amendment dealing with the UMS concern but have not had the opportunity to review the concerns brought forward by DHHS. There are several people here that can speak more to the bill and I am committed to working with all stakeholders to come up with a solution that will help more this bill forward and address the critical workforce shortage our mental health care industry is facing.