



Supporting Independence
Careers. Community. Connections.

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1280 - Westbrook, ME 04098
Street Address:
15 Saunders Way, Suite 500-G, Westbrook, ME 04092
Telephone 207-523-5170 (V/TTY) – Fax 207-289-7029

In Support of LD 744

*An Act to Ensure Access to Services for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by
Requiring Rate Studies for Home and Community-based Services*

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

April 13, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committees.

My name is Ann-Marie Mayberry. I am the executive director for GMS.

For over four decades, GMS has been designing and maintaining programs that enhance, support, and teach through knowledge, respect, and dignity, in the Greater Portland area. GMS provides Shared Living, In-Home Support, Case Management, and Residential Services. We are dedicated to serving the community by providing a valuable service while working collaboratively with individuals served, guardians, family members, agencies, caseworkers, and other advocates. The individuals we serve live, work, volunteer and socialize in their community with support from dedicated professionals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of LD 744 which would direct DHHS to conduct rate studies in 2024 for MaineCare HCBS Group Home and Community Supports and Community Membership services for people with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. This bill would also direct the department to establish a work group to help determine a daily rate for Group Home services and adjust the minimum staffing level to 85% after the Appendix K waiver ends in November and before new rates would be available in January 2025.

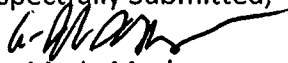
Without this bridge, more agencies will be forced to close group homes. There have been approximately 75 group home closures in the past two years. GMS has closed 5 group homes since 2020, affecting the lives of 11 people. The closures are due to funding that does not support a living wage, forcing direct support professionals to leave this career for higher pay and leading to high staff turnover and an inability to attract new workers. The crisis is compounded by increased expenses, inflation, a rising minimum wage, and a Maine unemployment rate of 2.8%. The closure of these group homes is undoubtedly a challenging situation for everyone involved, especially for the individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. These group homes provided a stable and supportive environment for those who require assistance with daily living activities. The closure of these homes has left these individuals without the familiar structure and support system they had come to rely on, which can be a significant source of stress and anxiety.

Additionally, there is a significant cost associated with adapting homes to accommodate the medical and behavioral needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Closing these homes means losing the investment in the modifications and resources that were put into them. Furthermore, finding alternative accommodations that meet the same standards and requirements is nearly impossible in Portland's housing market. This often means that individuals must move out of their community and away from family and friends.

In conclusion, the closure of these residential group homes and the displacement of people with intellectual disabilities is a significant loss for the community. It is essential to acknowledge the impact this has on individuals and their families. It is not only essential but an expectation of the Home and Community Base Service (HCBS) regulation that the Department investment in disability services and support systems to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a fulfilling, independent life, in the community of their choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ann-Marie Mayberry

ammayberry@gmsme.org