



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine

The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

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Testimony in Support of LD 1494

An Act to Help Address the Worker Shortage in Behavioral Health Care Services by Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees

Sponsored by Representative Lydia Crafts

April 25, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. 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. 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 1494**, An Act to Help Address the Worker Shortage in Behavioral Health Care Services by Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees. As committee members, I am sure you have already heard quite often that Maine has a severe behavioral health clinical workforce shortage. This proposal would go a long way to solving this challenge.

In our Board meetings at the Alliance, we often discuss the frustration of trying to hire clinical staff and get them through the licensing process in a timely way after they have just graduated or when they are trying to move here from out of state. The ability to get a provisional license to begin to practice while they are waiting for the official process to take place would help tremendously.

Given the complexity of the mental health workforce challenges today, we recognize that no single approach will solve this; we need a collective answer, a collective vision for the future. We must come together to support as many paths as possible to move Maine's behavioral health system forward.

According to a recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Maine has 68 designated mental health care shortage areas, with nearly 400,000 Mainers impacted and, in these areas, less than 20% of the needs are being met.¹

This proposal is a vital piece of any forward-looking strategic plan to address the behavioral health clinical workforce shortage in our state. I thank Representative Crafts for bringing this proposal forward and urge an ought-to-pass vote by committee members. Thank you.

¹ <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas->

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