



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 2128

An Act Regarding Nonemergency Transportation for MaineCare

Members

Sponsored by Representative Colleen Madigan

2.1.2024

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Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Charlotte Warren, I am a resident of Hallowell, and I am here to speak on behalf of my client, the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's community-based providers of these much-needed services, providing care annually 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 and the thousands of Maine families that they serve, I am here today to speak in support of LD 2128, An Act Regarding Nonemergency Transportation for MaineCare Members. This bill provides that a MaineCare member using MaineCare contracted nonemergency transportation services to travel to a MaineCare reimbursable appointment may elect to have one adult accompany the MaineCare member while traveling. Further, it directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules to require MaineCare contracts with providers of nonemergency transportation to include provisions allowing one adult to accompany a MaineCare member to a MaineCare reimbursable appointment.

There are many reasons that the Alliance supports this common-sense proposal, but I will only list our top three reasons here:

1. **Enhanced Access to Behavioral Healthcare:** Allowing another adult to accompany a MaineCare Member for non-emergency transportation expenses would improve access to healthcare services. Many seniors and individuals with disabilities may face challenges in remembering all that was said in a healthcare appointment. Having another adult present to take notes during the appointment – if they so choose – can greatly improve the success of their healthcare appointments.
2. **Cost-Effective Prevention:** Providing for MaineCare members to be accompanied by another adult for non-emergency transportation is a proactive approach to healthcare. It can help prevent more serious health issues by facilitating regular check-ups, preventive care, and timely medical interventions. Preventive care is often more cost-effective than treating advanced health conditions.
3. **Reduced Emergency Room Visits:** When individuals lack access to preventative care, emergency room visits increase. Preventative care for behavioral health issues can prevent a behavioral health crisis resulting in an emergency room visit.

I urge this committee to vote ought-to-pass on this important legislation. Thank you.