



# Caribou Nursing Home, Inc.

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dba's of Caribou and Presque Isle Rehab and Nursing Centers

Testimony before the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Health and Human Services on

*LD 2214, An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025*

**Public Hearing: Monday, February 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, and Representative Meyer, as well as Distinguished Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Phil Cyr, I am President of the Caribou Nursing Home, Inc. that operates under the two dbas of Caribou and Presque Isle Rehab and Nursing Centers.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 2214 as it does not provide enough funding for nursing homes and residential care facilities to continue providing care in Maine.

Our two central Aroostook facilities are currently underpaid a combined total of **\$85,000 per month** by MaineCare. This is partly due to inadequate MaineCare rates and partly due to lack of staff resulting in our operating at only 80% capacity. This lack of staff is due to the Covid exodus of healthcare staff. The Covid supplemental funding we received has run out and was very inadequate. As a result, we're seriously contemplating having to close one of our two nursing facilities. The accelerating closure of nursing facilities in Maine isn't over. There are more to come. One-time supplemental payments are inadequate because we cannot use that money to boost wage scales as the money won't be there next year, as evidenced by the inadequate amounts in the supplemental budget.

Not only have dozens of nursing facilities closed in the past decade, the quality of care has gone down. I've been in this business since 1976 (nearly 48 years) and I always noticed the nursing home horror stories were always in the same group of (usually) southern states. Those states also had the lowest payment rates in the USA. Maine is on the way to join those states. You can't even serve hamburger if all you have is a Mac 'N Cheese budget!

There's a misperception that nursing home owners are only wanting to line their greedy pockets. Are you aware that ALL MaineCare money not used for nursing home care is returned to the state? And that's after the audit department has thrown out a list of legitimate business expenses. There's no MaineCare money lining anybody's pockets. In fact the opposite is what happens. Most operators are having to supplement MaineCare resident care with money from other privately funded residents. I've been told by a DHHS official in the past that was the plan.

If you want insufficient and poor-quality nursing home care in Maine, just keep doing what you've been doing. You've wiped out 51 of the 132 Maine nursing homes in the last 29 years, you've only got 81 left to put out of business. Call me at 498-3102 if you want to hear more.

"Our Service Says We Care"