

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in strong support of L.D. 753, An act to support an Aroostook Adult Treatment and Recovery Court. My name is Julia Macek, ^{LCSW} Program Director of Behavioral Health and Integration, of the Aroostook Mental Health Center. I am here to advocate for the expansion ^{off and} and these courts into Aroostook County, the only county in the state that doesn't have a ^{Treatment} drug court. These courts have proven to be one of the most effective tools in addressing substance use disorders within the justice system.

AMHC has experience providing treatment to clients using All Rise Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. This is the gold standard evidence-based treatment court model with extensive research supporting the high-level effectiveness throughout the US. This model integrates judicial oversight, treatment, and accountability to provide non-violent offenders with a structured path to recovery. It does not simply penalize substance use; instead, it treats the underlying addiction that often drives criminal behavior. Research has consistently shown that treatment courts reduce substance use, improve mental and physical health outcomes, and increase long-term employment for participants.

One of the most compelling reasons to support Adult Treatment and Recovery Courts is the significant cost savings they provide to taxpayers. Nationally, studies show that for every \$1 invested in ^{Treatment} drug courts, taxpayers save up to \$3.36 in reduced criminal justice costs alone. When factoring in savings from decreased victimization, reduced emergency room visits, and lower incarceration rates, the return on investment grows even higher. Treatment courts help divert individuals from expensive jail and prison sentences into programs that address the root cause of their criminal activity, ultimately reducing the burden on law enforcement, courts, and correctional facilities.

Most importantly, treatment courts reduce recidivism. Traditional incarceration does little to address the cycle of addiction, but data shows that

individuals who complete a treatment court program are far less likely to reoffend. On average, participants have recidivism rates 20 to 40% lower than those processed through the standard criminal justice system. This means safer communities, fewer new victims, and lives restored rather than destroyed.

In summary, Adult Treatment and Recovery Courts are a proven, cost-effective solution to addressing substance use disorders in the justice system. All Rise Adult Treatment Court practice standards not only reduce crime and save taxpayer dollars but also offers a second chance to individuals ready to rebuild their lives. I urge this committee to continue supporting and expanding access to these courts into Aroostook County so that we can break the cycle of addiction and crime and build a stronger, healthier community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.