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## **Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine** *The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

### **Testimony in Opposition of** **An Act to Increase Availability and Affordability of Mental Health** **Care and Substance Use Disorder Services by Removing the** **Certificate of Need Requirement – LD 189**

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services. My name is Adam Bloom-Paicopolos. I am a resident of Wells and am proud to serve as the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine (the Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association representing Maine's community-based behavioral health agencies who provide much-needed mental health and substance use services to over 80,000 children, adults, and families annually. 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 opposition to LD 189, which would remove certificate of need requirements for behavioral health providers.**

While I appreciate the intent behind this legislation—to expand access to care—removing the certificate of need process would have serious unintended consequences on our behavioral health system. The certificate of need process is not a bureaucratic obstacle; rather, it is a critical tool that ensures new services and facilities meet established quality standards, demonstrate financial sustainability, and do not destabilize existing community-based providers.

Maine's behavioral health system is already under immense strain due to well documented workforce shortages and inadequate reimbursement rates. Without the certificate of need process, new, unvalidated organizations could enter the market without clear oversight or quality protections for consumers, potentially drawing resources and staff away from longstanding community providers who are already struggling to meet the behavioral health needs of individuals and families across the state under current conditions. This could lead to fragmentation of care, service gaps, and financial instability for existing organizations that provide essential treatment and services.

Additionally, the certificate of need process is an important step towards ensuring that new services are established where they are most needed—not just where they are most profitable. Removing this safeguard could result in an oversaturation of providers in urban areas while rural communities, which already face severe workforce shortages, continue to go underserved.

Rather than eliminating the certificate of need requirement, I respectfully ask for your consideration of solutions that strengthen and grow Maine's existing behavioral health system of care and address access concerns in a more targeted manner. Initiatives such as investing in our behavioral health workforce, maintaining our reimbursement rate reform process and cost-of-living-adjustments, and supporting the implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), which expand access to care and provide comprehensive and coordinated care in a transformative way are examples of opportunities that can help move the needle.

**I strongly encourage this committee to vote against LD 189 and preserve Maine's ability to maintain a well-regulated, high-quality behavioral health system.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this afternoon issue. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Bloom-Paicopolos', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Bloom-Paicopolos, MPP  
Executive Director