



**Written Testimony of the
Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council of Maine
March 18, 2025
In Support of**

LD 623 "An Act to Enhance Support Services for Individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury"

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

On behalf of the Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council (ABIAC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on LD 623. Established in statute in 2007, our Council is comprised of 25 members who reside in towns from Caribou, Eagle Lake, Winterport, Rockland, and Fayette to Oxford, Yarmouth, Saco and too many more to list. We have wide geographic representation because brain injury exists in every county across this great state.

The ABIAC identifies three favorable aspects of this bill. First, with the language modification to keep Maine dollars in Maine by outlining preference for the Department to contract with a Maine-based brain injury organization or with an organization with an affiliate in the state, the door opens to have core support brain injury funding as a line item in the budget, rather than as a discretionary reference. In these unpredictable economic times, the Council would like to see more security with a line item. It is our hope that this bill opens the way for that change.

Core brain injury support services make an enormous difference in the lives of survivors and families. These services are available to the uninsured and underinsured. Core support services, like neuroresource facilitation, fill a service gap and are a short-term guiding hand when someone discharges from acute care and does not know where to go or how to access care. A neuroresource facilitator can help find community-based treatment or even fill out an application when the survivor is unable due to the symptoms of the injury.

Second, Maine has benefited from one of the coveted TBI State Partnership grants, and the language in the bill codifies the state partnership. These grants have helped develop Maine's brain injury services, and the ABIAC is grateful.

Third, the bill highlights access to screening. When I first started in the brain injury field, I wondered why screening could be important. It seemed to me there are a lot of other important causes requiring state dollars. I did not know at the time that the prevalence of brain injury in Maine is so high: over 279,000 Mainers have experienced a traumatic brain injury. While many may make recoveries and live functional lives, others will experience lifelong disability as brain injury is a chronic condition. Timely access to the

right care is important for rehabilitation, and for curtailing premature entry into nursing homes or into the criminal justice system. In short, brain injury screening opens doors to the right care and connects survivors to resources.

In summary, LD 623 is a small step toward supporting Maine's brain injury infrastructure. On behalf of the ABIAC, I ask that you vote in favor of this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Jello', written in a cursive style.

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