

**Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine
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Testimony of John Bolduc

Before the Health and Human Services Committee In Support of
**LD 763, An Act to Improve Long-term Care by Providing Funding for
Nursing Facilities**

March 28, 2025 at 10:00 am

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the
Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is John Bolduc and I have served for 30 years as the Executive
Director of Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine.

I am here today to testify in support of LD 763.

I would like to speak to the threats my home is facing. We are a small non-
profit nursing home in Auburn known for the quality of care we provide as well
as the longevity and experience of our staff, we have had to take drastic
actions to survive the years since 2019.

After raising staff wages by as much as 50% over four years, we were able to
keep our temporary agency staff usage to nearly zero and have saved
ourselves the expense of using agency staff that would cost 100% more than
our own dedicated employees.

It is a huge struggle for us to keep our staffing in-house and requires a lot of
overtime and sacrifice. Our small size and the presence of several key long-
term employees is to our advantage.

Our success in keeping agency staff out of our facility has saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it has assured that the best people, those who know our residents, those who have experience with and love our residents, are the ones taking care of them.

However, even though we have taken steps to sustain our ability to care for our residents, of whom over 90% are paid for by MaineCare, we are still losing money. Reimbursement does not cover the cost of providing care.

In 2026, the new Nursing Facility funding model will reduce our rates by \$12.85 per resident per day, to reflect the department's expectation that we will be able to reduce our agency labor to compensate. Our reimbursement will be cut by \$117,000 because of the expectation that we will be cutting agency use! We have no agency use already!

This \$117,000 cut will be added to our losses. There has been a loss of 29 nursing homes in recent years and we have no wish to be the 30th!

Facilities who are using agency staff ARE doing everything they can do to stop doing so. There is no incentive that can change the fact that staff are not available. It is ridiculous to think that threats of lower reimbursement will change reality.

We are in an extremely competitive market for a diminishing pool of workers. We need to maintain our staff and yearly raises are a crucial part of that. Yet the Biennial budget lacks a COLA or any sort of inflation factor. And the new model doesn't include regular rebasing of rates. This is also a reduction in rates. Cutting our reimbursement while costs of staff, food, energy, and everything will continue to rise, that is a recipe which will cause closures. The state could be looking at several more nursing facility closures in the next few years. This is not hyperbole; this is reality, it is common sense.

I ask the committee to please support LD 763 as a way to keep nursing homes open and continue to care for the residents of Maine. Thank you for your time.