

**Testimony of Mary Jane Richards-McDade, CEO  
North Country Associates**

Testimony before the Committee on Health and Human Services in support of  
***LD 772, An Act to Assist Nursing Facilities in the Management of Facility Beds***

Public Hearing: Friday, March 28th, 2025 at 10:00 am  
Cross Office Building, Room 209

Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer as well as Distinguished Members of the Committee on the Committee of Health and Human Services:

My name is Mary Jane Richards-McDade, I serve as CEO for North Country Associates. We own and manage 20 nursing homes, assisted living centers, residential care facilities and ICF/IID's across the state.

I am testifying in support of ***LD 772, An Act to Assist Nursing Facilities in the Management of Facility Beds***. This bill seeks to modify the criteria to reinstate nursing facility beds that have been voluntarily taken offline by removing language that limits reinstatement to beds removed prior to July 1, 2007 for reasons other than to create private rooms. Further, the bill seeks to expedite the Certificate of Need approval to reopen reserved beds and would waive the requirement that providers have to demonstrate that any increases in MaineCare costs would be offset by other MaineCare savings.

North Country has closed several facilities since 2018. Many of those closures were due to inadequate reimbursement coupled with the challenge of providing enough direct care to meet the resident's needs. As a way of avoiding a complete closure of a facility NCA has often times decreased the bed capacity in order to decrease the reliance on a certain number of nursing or direct care staff.

In a unique instance, one of our facilities would like to expand their bed capacity. Many years ago this facility was experiencing a difficult time hiring enough in-house staff to care for their residents. Not surprising to anyone in this room. Nurses in particular were extremely hard to

find. Consolidating the number of units or wings allowed them to decrease the amount of nurses required. It made sense financially to change the licensed bed capacity.

Now, due to changes in the market of this particular facility, due unfortunately to nursing home closures, the facility finds itself in a rare situation that they can expand services because they have been able to hire enough in-house staff without using agency and there is a need for more nursing home beds in this particular market. This is the exact situation this bill seeks to assist.

By eliminating some of the hurdles this facility will have to go through in order to reinstate more beds will allow some nursing home beds to come back on-line and provide service to the community that so desperately needs them.

In conclusion, I support LD 772 and appreciate the intent of reducing any hurdles to bringing more long term care beds back to Maine.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Mary Jane Richards-McDade, CEO

North Country Associates