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Testimony of Representative Michele Meyer presenting

LD 979, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am pleased to present, on behalf of the Department, **LD 979, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services.**

This bill, as the title clearly suggests, provides for the legislative review, as required for those rules designated as Major Substantive, of the Department's proposed Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule.

I will allow the Department to provide in-depth details around how the proposed rule would repeal and replace the existing one, but it is my understanding that, with our approval, the rule will go from having 10 different parts to two. Part A will govern Assisted Living Programs, and Part B will govern Residential Care Facilities. This simplified structure is responsive to requests over the years to consolidate and simplify the existing rule and is expected to improve licensee understanding and compliance.

The bill also gradually implements staffing increases over several years to ensure that facilities are establishing minimum standards that apply to all providers regardless of payment type. I know that we are going to hear today from providers that are concerned about maintaining staffing levels for their facilities; however, maintaining quality of care in the nursing facilities of Maine is something we cannot compromise. Every patient in a nursing facility in Maine has a proven need for round-the-clock nursing care, and staff need to be there to provide it.

The Department will follow my testimony and will discuss in more detail the elements of this proposed rule change. Thank you for my time, and I ask that you hold any questions you may have for them.