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*Testimony of Rep. Lydia Crafts presenting*

**LD 1084 Resolve, to Alleviate the Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage by  
Allowing the Training and Granting of Behavioral Health Certifications by  
Community-based Agencies and Hospitals**

***Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services***

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. My name is Lydia Crafts, and I represent House District 46, which includes Bristol, Damariscotta, Monhegan Plantation, Newcastle and Nobleboro. Today, I am pleased to present **LD 1084 Resolve, to Alleviate the Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage by Allowing the Training and Granting of Behavioral Health Certifications by Community-based Agencies and Hospitals.**

I bring this bill forward to solve one of the many challenges behavioral health agencies face in filling critical staffing positions. It addresses the provision of training for mental health rehabilitation technicians (MHRT/Cs), certified residential medication aides (CRMAs), and behavioral health professionals (BHPs); positions that provide direct care for children and adults living with mental illness in their homes, community settings and residential placements.

The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral Health currently has a contract with the Center for Learning at the Catherine Cutler Institute, and they provide the required certification training. Some providers, several of whom you will hear from today, face challenges and delays in accessing training and efficiently certifying staff. These providers are requesting the ability to train their staff for these critical roles and not to have to rely on a third-party trainer.

I believe we all agree that supporting a strong, skilled and capable behavioral workforce helps all of our communities, which is why I'm working with the Department, Catherine Cutler and providers to find agreeable solutions to the current challenges. I ask this committee to consider giving us time to solve these problems between now and the start of the second regular session of

the 132nd Legislature. If, at that time, we're unable to return with agreeable solutions, I would kindly ask to pass this resolve.

I appreciate your flexibility and willingness to help support improved collaboration between these entities. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.