



**Holly Stover**

71 Dover Rd.

Boothbay, ME 04537

Phone: (207) 633-5979

[Holly.Stover@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Holly.Stover@legislature.maine.gov)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

April 8, 2025

*Testimony of Rep. Holly B. Stover presenting*

**LD 1380, Resolve, Establishing the Study Group on Solutions to Address  
Maine's Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Representative Holly Stover and I serve House District 48 and the communities of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Edgecomb, South Bristol, Southport, and Westport Island. I am here today to present **LD 1380, Resolve, Establishing the Study Group on Solutions to Address Maine's Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage**.

As we know, the behavioral health crisis in Maine is a significant challenge, and this bill offers a thoughtful and collaborative approach to addressing one of the core issues—our state's insufficient workforce in this crucial field.

Maine, like many other states, is facing a significant shortage of behavioral health professionals. This shortage impacts the quality and availability of services and exacerbates the mental health and substance use crises faced by many of our communities. As our state continues to navigate the complexities of behavioral health, it is clear that we must invest in a workforce that is equipped to meet the rising demand for services.

This shortage is particularly felt in rural and underserved communities like mine, where individuals are struggling to access timely, quality care. Without sufficient staffing, our mental health and substance use providers are overwhelmed, and vulnerable individuals—often those most in need—are left without the support they need. As someone who works in behavioral health, I routinely spend hours and often days trying to find critically needed services for people in my community.

LD 1380 proposes a comprehensive and collaborative study of Maine's behavioral health workforce needs. By bringing together diverse stakeholders—from Senate and House members to organizations

such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness Maine, the Consumer Council System of Maine, and the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, among others—the study group will be able to draw from a broad range of expertise and experience. This will ensure that all perspectives are considered as we explore effective solutions. The establishment of this study group is a critical first step in finding lasting solutions to this growing problem.

The proposed initiatives, such as establishing pilot programs for community behavioral health teaching agencies, enhancing loan repayment programs for behavioral health workers, and introducing stipends for behavioral health students and interns, are innovative and practical. These initiatives can help attract and retain skilled professionals in the behavioral health field, offering both short- and long-term solutions to the workforce shortage.

This bill's timeline, with a report due by December 2025, ensures that Maine will have a clear, actionable plan to address the behavioral health workforce shortage within the next two years. The legislative focus and potential for recommended legislation arising from the study group will provide a pathway for meaningful change, making a lasting impact on our behavioral health system.

I hope you will join me in offering your strong support for LD 1380, which will provide the framework necessary for Maine to examine the behavioral health workforce shortage and propose actionable, sustainable solutions. We cannot afford to wait any longer to address this crisis, and the proposed study group is an important step in ensuring that Maine has the trained professionals needed to provide essential services to those most in need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support this bill and work toward solutions that will strengthen Maine's behavioral health workforce and improve access to care for all our residents.