

Testimony in support of LD 721, a Resolve to Support Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State of Maine.

April 9th, 2025

Thank you, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished Committee Members for this opportunity to speak in support of LD 721, Resolve to Support Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State of Maine.

My name is Eric Meyer. I am a licensed clinical social worker, and President and CEO of Spurwink Services.

LD 721 would allocate \$2 million in one-time funding that would enable all five state-approved CCBHCs in Maine to maintain operations, expand services offered, and enhance access to care across our state.

Over the next year, with this funding, Spurwink's CCBHC has projected a 70%-plus increase in service delivery, representing approximately 700 new clients in Cumberland County alone. It would include the expansion of three currently hard-to-access services: 1) school-based mental health services, 2) home and community-based services for children, youth, and families, and 3) child and adult psychiatry. It would also enhance access to services for veterans, an urgent need in light of recent federal cuts. Imagine similar increased access across all 5 state-certified CCBHC providers. These funds would help our entire state.

CCBHC's provide no-wrong-door access to comprehensive, evidence-based, behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment for children, youth, families, and adults, regardless of ability to pay.¹ It is a federally supported bipartisan initiative with demonstrated success² increasing access to care and quality of care, while decreasing costs, in demonstration projects across the United States.

As one example from Spurwink's CCBHC in Portland, a member of the local unhoused community well known for frequent emergency room visits, psychiatric hospitalizations, legal involvement, and an inability to maintain stable housing due to unmet behavioral health needs, was one of the first individuals to present for care. The flexibility of the CCBHC model enabled him to receive case management services, psychiatry, crisis and clinical support on his own terms. As he built relationships he transitioned to the Assertive Community Treatment Team, an evidence-based model supported by the CCBHC. He is now doing well for the first time in years, engaging in treatment, utilizing his medication, and living at the Homeless Service Center awaiting his own apartment.

Our behavioral health system has made tremendous gains over the last six years. This is an opportunity to address areas of need where, despite our collective best efforts, progress has been all too slow; while, at the same time, drawing down an increased 72.9% federal match. Like other behavioral health agencies across the state, Spurwink has a 52% vacancy rate for our clinical positions. Across the agency this represents approximately 2000 vulnerable Mainers currently unable to access public school counseling, outpatient therapy, and home-based care. Without the funding associated with LD721, Spurwink is unlikely to be able to join the State's CCBHC Demonstration. We will not be able to expand, or potentially even sustain, these services.

Spurwink respectfully requests you vote in support of Representative Graham's bill LD 721. Help us close the service gap. Thank you for your time and consideration, I'm happy to answer any questions.



**SPUR
WINK**

going the distance

ADMINISTRATION
207.871.1200 phone
207.871.1232 fax
901 Washington Ave
Suite 100
Portland, ME | 04103
www.spurwink.org

¹ <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/ccbhc-success-center/ccbhc-overview/#>

² https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/24.06.3_2024-CCBHC-Impact-Report_FINAL.pdf