



Anne Graham

P.O. Box 66

Yarmouth, Maine 04096

Phone: (207) 287-1430

Anne.Graham@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

April 9, 2025

Testimony of Representative Anne Graham presenting

LD 721, Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer and esteemed colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to present **LD 721, Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State**, which I have submitted as an emergency bill. This legislation is an important companion to LD 63 that I introduced earlier this session, also as an emergency that passed overwhelmingly in the House, unanimously in the Senate, and was recently signed into law by the Governor. LD 63 enabled the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) demonstration program to get off the ground, while LD 721 is the critical next step to ensure the full and successful implementation of this transformative model of care that will significantly enhance mental health and substance use disorder services for Maine residents.

Like many states, Maine faces significant challenges in providing adequate behavioral health services. Our state continues to struggle with high rates of mental health conditions and substance use disorders, while rural communities face particular barriers to accessing timely care. The behavioral health workforce shortage has reached crisis levels, and the COVID-19 pandemic only intensified these existing problems.

In June 2024, Maine was accepted into the federal CCBHC Medicaid demonstration program, providing our state with a unique opportunity to address these challenges through a proven model of care.

The CCBHC model is already demonstrating positive impacts in Maine. According to recent data from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's 2024 CCBHC Impact Survey¹, Maine's CCBHCs are expanding access to care, particularly among uninsured people, children/youth and veterans. 60 percent of Maine's CCBHCs are providing services in various school settings, while 75 percent have increased the number of individuals receiving medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. 20 percent have added critical crisis services, including mobile crisis response, crisis stabilization and/or crisis call lines, and 60 percent have established collaborative activities with the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. 100 percent of CCBHCs in Maine have hired or transitioned staff and/or created new positions, addressing our workforce challenges.

¹ "2024 CCBHC Impact Report." *The National Council for Wellbeing*, www.thenationalcouncil.org/resources/2024-ccbhc-impact-report/.

While the federal demonstration program provides significant support, LD 721 seeks to address a critical funding gap. The \$1 million per year in one-time funding will support the full implementation of Maine's five CCBHCs and enable the hiring of clinical and administrative staff critical to program success. This funding would also be dedicated to the program's rate methodology, which would give Maine to access enhanced federal match dollars.

The emergency status of this bill reflects the urgency of this funding. Without this additional support, CCBHCs currently in the program will struggle to recruit and retain the qualified staff to deliver comprehensive services. CCBHCs yet to implement would be unable to do so, leaving vulnerable Mainers without access to critical care and the full potential of the federal demonstration program may not be realized.

The investment proposed in LD 721 will yield significant returns for Maine. We can expect reduced emergency department visits and hospitalizations through earlier intervention, decreased involvement with the criminal justice system, improved health outcomes for individuals with complex conditions, economic benefits from increased workforce participation and productivity, and long-term cost savings across multiple systems, including healthcare, education, and public safety.

LD 721 represents a critical investment in Maine's behavioral health infrastructure at a pivotal moment. The CCBHC model has demonstrated success across the country, and Maine has the opportunity to fully realize its benefits with this additional funding support.

I urge the committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 721 to ensure all Maine residents have access to the comprehensive, high-quality behavioral health services they deserve, regardless of where they live or their ability to pay.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Amendment Offered by Representative Graham

Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, Maine was accepted into the federal certified community behavioral health clinic Medicaid demonstration program in June 2024;

Whereas, the program will address a critical lack of access to and availability of behavioral health services in the State and deliver effective evidence-based treatments for mental health and substance use disorder to residents in their local communities;

Whereas, this legislation must take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period to address the critical need for additional funding to support full implementation of the 5 certified community behavioral health clinics in the State by the implementation deadline; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Appropriations and allocations. Resolved: That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

Medical Care - Payments to Providers 0147

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to support the full implementation of the 5 certified community behavioral health clinics certified by the State as part of the federal certified community behavioral health clinic Medicaid demonstration program, including hiring clinical and administrative staff critical to the success of the program.

The funding must support enhancement of the department's special certified community behavioral health clinic funding in a manner that enables the department to access the designated enhanced federal match for the program. The department must continue to engage with certified community behavioral health clinic providers regarding how available funding is best leveraged for the program to achieve full implementation. ~~The funding must support enhancement of the department's proposed certified community behavioral health clinic rate methodology, including increasing wages for new clinical positions that require graduate level education from 100% to 125% of the state median wage as reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and increasing wages for new administrative positions from 75% to 100% of the state median wage as reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.~~

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

132nd Maine Legislature

Resolve, to Support the Full Implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in the State
L.D.

SUMMARY

This resolve provides one-time funding to support the full implementation of the 5 certified community behavioral health clinics certified by the State as part of the federal certified community behavioral health clinic Medicaid demonstration program, including hiring clinical and administrative staff critical to the success of the program. The funding must support enhancement of the Department of Health and Human Services' special certified community behavioral health clinic funding in a manner that enables the department to access the designated enhanced federal match for the program. The department must continue to engage with certified community behavioral health clinic providers regarding how available funding is best leveraged for the program to achieve full implementation. ~~The funding must support enhancement of the Department of Health and Human Services' proposed certified community behavioral health clinic rate methodology, including increasing wages for new clinical positions that require graduate-level education from 100% to 125% of the state median wage as reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and increasing wages for new administrative positions from 75% to 100% of the state median wage as reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.~~