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Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine *The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers*

Testimony Neither for Nor Against **An Act to Require Data Collection on and Reporting of Psychiatric Hospital** **Resources and Transparency in Denials of Emergency Involuntary** **Admissions to Psychiatric Hospitals – LD 1239**

April 9, 2025

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Adam Bloom-Paicopolos. I am a resident of Wells and am proud to serve as the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine (the Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association representing Maine's community-based behavioral health agencies who provide much-needed mental health and substance use services to over 80,000 children, adults, and families annually. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

On behalf of the Alliance, I am here today to speak neither for nor against LD 1239, "An Act to Require Data Collection on and Reporting of Psychiatric Hospital Resources and Transparency in Denials of Emergency Involuntary Admissions to Psychiatric Hospitals" and to offer the Alliance's perspective on its implementation.

We recognize the critical importance of having comprehensive data on psychiatric hospital resources and transparency in admission denials. The proposed requirements for reporting could provide valuable insights into system deficiencies and could ultimately lead to improved care for individuals experiencing mental health crises. Having this type of information publicly available allows for Department leadership, consumer advocates, and providers to better identify resource gaps and work to address them to improve access and outcomes.

However, we must emphasize the importance of implementing these data collection requirements in a manner that does not create an excessive administrative burden for healthcare providers already operating in a resource-constrained environment. Specifically, the daily reporting requirement outlined in Section 8 mandates data submission every 24 hours. While real-time bed availability data is valuable, this frequency may create significant operational challenges.

If you are to move forward with this legislation, we would recommend that the Committee engage with providers and consumer advocates on developing a reporting cadence that balances the very real need for data with the on-the-ground capacity of an already strained system. We would also recommend that the Committee consider phasing in implementation to allow facilities time to develop efficient workflows and to balance data collection needs with operational realities.

In conclusion, while we appreciate the intent of LD 1239 and acknowledge the need for better data collection across Maine's behavioral health system to enhance access to care and improve the services individuals receive, we urge implementation methods that will achieve the sponsor's goals without compromising the primary mission of providing timely, high-quality care to those in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Bloom-Paicopolos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Adam Bloom-Paicopolos, MPP
Executive Director