

April 9th, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is April Kerr. I am a resident of Farmington, and I am testifying today **in favor of LD1239**.

It's very concerning to learn about the struggles that many of my peers are experiencing time and time again as they try to seek help during a time of crisis. They are staying at home or on the streets, suffering in silence and many times getting worse as they struggle with a mental crisis and doing it alone. They stay out of the emergency department (ED) as much as possible because they have been told that there are no beds available so many times. They have had the experience of going to the ED and had to be held for long, drawn-out periods, waiting alone in what can seem like a torturous situation. Other times, they are held a short time and released back into the community without the extent of care that they felt was needed. No beds, oh wait maybe, nope, I guess not. "I'm not sure why they let me go again. I was just in here two days ago, and they sent me home. I'm back today, and again they send me home even though I'm still not feeling safe. I have nowhere to go, except back home alone," one woman told me as I gave her a ride home after a visit to the ED. One other time, she was transported way up north by ambulance because no one closer would take her, is what she was told, and she didn't know why; she just wanted some help, she shared with me. I am not sure of the cost of an ambulance ride, but it must have been costly, especially one that is 50+ miles.

To provide an informative outlook of what is available for the consumers when in need of a placement in a psychiatric bed, they need a clear picture of what they are working with. If you are trying to take a picture for a reference purpose and you are out of focus, it's useless. You don't keep the picture. You discard it and make adjustments; maybe the lens needs to be adjusted or perhaps even changed to bring into view a clearer useful picture.

We the people come before you to help YOU make a more informed decision, but today it's not just about you but many others being provided with much needed information to have a comprehensive view of the data of what is available and where, and if it isn't available, then why? We need

transparency within the psychiatric healthcare system. If there are issues and they are unknown, it makes sense to me that we need to look at how we can change things to alleviate the issues. Let's change the lens. Let's get a clear picture. Let's look at a more cost-effective way of being able to refer to the data, considering things like less money spent on someone's hourly wages as they search for a bed over and over again, fewer hours/days spent in an Emergency Room waiting for a psychiatric bed, less mental anguish for the person sitting in the ER waiting having little to no interaction with anyone as talked about in one particular case referred to by Mark Joyce, from Disability Rights Of Maine in his blog see bellow. Let's adjust the lens and provide a clear and useful picture.

<https://drme.org/author/mark-joyce>

In closing, I urge you to **pass LD1239**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, April L Kerr

Farmington