



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

219 Capitol Street, Suite 7
Augusta, ME 04330

Phone: 207.430.8300
Fax: 207.430.8301
Toll-Free: 877.207.5073
www.maineccsm.org

April 30, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify in support of **LD 1590: "An Act to Reduce the Counselor and Social Worker Shortage by Amending Reciprocity Requirements for Those Professionals from Other Jurisdictions"**.

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

I am here to talk about some of the work we have been doing across the state of Maine and the feedback we are hearing from our fellow peers. We do forums and events to gather experiences from people who need and use Maine's mental health system. Mental Health workforce shortage and turnover are one area we hear a lot about.

When you think about where people first enter the system for support, if not in a crisis, it is the most basic service you could ask for: outpatient counseling. This gives people the support needed to avoid much higher levels of care and when you think about it, it makes sense. Think about your own lives and the needs you have had for extra support. Sometimes those are filled with natural support like family and friends but sometimes we need an independent, skilled ear to not only listen but help us to develop skills to manage life in the future. This may be all you need or there may be additional services that are suggested.

Do you know how long waitlists are in Maine? I would like to say you could get support no matter when you need it, but that is not true. Often, if you have MaineCare for insurance the wait is longer. Our community mental health providers are often the only ones that accept MaineCare for insurance. Waitlists in southern Maine are often a minimum of six months. Other parts of the state that are more rural the wait times are even longer.



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

The reason I am telling this story in relation to this bill is that we must look at all measures that will bring more clinical staff working in community mental health services in Maine, especially if they have a clean license to practice from where they are moving from.

We need all solutions on the table to help support the clinical workforce in Maine so that hopefully it is not you or your loved one that suffers waiting for needed support in a time of need.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Simonne Maline

Executive Director
