

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the committee.

My name is Bob Staples. I am the President of the Brett M. Staples Brain Disorder Awareness Coalition.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding LD 1799. I come before you neither in support of nor in opposition to the bill, but to offer comments on proposed amendments that may strengthen its implementation and overall impact.

Specifically, I would like to raise for consideration the inclusion of a representative from the Office of Behavioral Health Services in the panel tasked with conducting the study outlined in the legislation. As we continue to see growing intersections between behavioral health needs and the systems this study intends to address, their expertise would provide valuable insights and ensure that mental health perspectives are fully integrated into the panel's work.

In addition, I recommend the inclusion of a district attorney on the panel. Given the role that prosecutors play in the criminal justice system, their perspective is critical to understanding how proposed changes may impact public safety, case outcomes, and prosecutorial discretion. Their input can help ensure that any recommendations are both pragmatic and reflective of on-the-ground realities.

Additionally, I suggest that the chairs of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services be formally involved in the panel selection process. Their leadership and legislative experience, as well as their familiarity with the subject matter, can help ensure the panel reflects a balanced and informed cross-section of voices.

These additions are not intended to change the direction or intent of the bill, but rather to support a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to the study process.

Thank you for your time and for your continued attention to the health and wellbeing of Maine's residents.



## Brett M. Staples Brain Disorder Awareness Coalition

Posted by Evie Enslow  
Apr 25 ·

**Balancing Autonomy and Care:** Court-ordered care sparks debate: autonomy versus intervention. But what about those who are unable to decide? For individuals with anosognosia (a condition where someone is unaware of their own illness or disability), untreated conditions can lead to homelessness, incarceration, or worse. Isn't it our duty to ensure access to care? Compassionate policies bridge the gap between personal freedom and life-saving support.



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## Brett M. Staples Brain Disorder Awareness Coalition

Posted by Evie Enslow  
Apr 21 ·

**A Human Rights Perspective:** Denying care to individuals with severe mental illness isn't just a public health issue—it's a human rights issue. When someone is unable to seek treatment due to anosognosia (a condition where someone is unaware of their own illness or disability), society has a responsibility to step in. Allowing preventable suffering is a failure of humanity. Ethical intervention ensures safety, health, and the preservation of basic human rights.



## Brett M. Staples Brain Disorder Awareness Coalition

Posted by Evie Enslow  
Apr 27 ·

**Breaking Stigma, Saving Lives:** Court-ordered care for severe mental illness often carries stigma, but it's a proven pathway to recovery for many. Programs like Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) have reunited families, prevented crises, and restored lives. Ignoring the needs of vulnerable individuals isn't respecting autonomy—it's neglect. Compassionate intervention saves lives.



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## Understanding Psychosis and Anosognosia

Psychosis and anosognosia are critical to understanding why some individuals need court-ordered outpatient support. Psychosis involves hallucinations and delusions that shape a person's reality, while anosognosia means the person cannot recognize they are ill. These conditions significantly impair one's ability to seek out treatment voluntarily. Community and outpatient services play a vital role in providing the necessary support and intervention to help individuals manage their conditions effectively. #BrainDisorderAwareness #MentalHealthSupport

