



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

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Testimony in Support of

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Review the Progressive Treatment Program and Processes by Which a Person May Be Involuntarily Admitted to a Psychiatric Hospital or Receive Court-ordered Community Treatment – LD 1799

May 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 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 in support of LD 1799, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Review the Progressive Treatment Program and Processes by Which a Person May Be Involuntarily Admitted to a Psychiatric Hospital or Receive Court-ordered Community Treatment," and thank Representative DeBrito for bringing this bill forward.

This resolve reflects a thoughtful and necessary step forward in examining how Maine supports individuals with serious and persistent mental illness through the Progressive Treatment Program (PTP) and related legal and clinical processes. As community providers on the front lines of Maine's behavioral health crisis, the Alliance supports this legislation's intent to take a comprehensive and inclusive look at how involuntary treatment and court-ordered community care are structured and implemented to be more effective, compassionate, accessible, and consistent.

PTPs are a vital tool within our behavioral health system. They are designed to support individuals who may not fully recognize their need for treatment and who experience repeated hospitalizations or disruptions in care. LD 1799 ensures a careful examination of the program informed by the lived experiences of consumers, the clinical perspectives of behavioral health professionals, and the operational realities of those administering the program.

In 2021, this Committee supported the establishment of a similar workgroup to review PTP and identify recommendations to improve the process.¹ Through a highly collaborative process between the Department, community providers, hospitals and consumer advocates on all sides of the issue, certain recommendations were put in place that strengthened this system for the better. Since then, however, as you all

know, the behavioral health landscape in Maine has drastically shifted for the worse from unprecedented levels of demand to a workforce shortage crisis.

Specific to the topic of PTPs, this Committee has consistently heard about the challenges of standing up and sustaining ACT teams across the state. Significant confusion persists among individuals and families in accessing and navigating the program. The way in which the law governing the program is written does not match up with many of the operational realities on the ground. And just this year, the Department and the Office of the Attorney General announced that state hospitals would no longer be the moving party on PTP extensions or modifications due to capacity constraints – adding additional strain on community providers and hospitals.

As you've heard in my testimony today, and in the testimonies of many others on this issue, there are several challenges, and even more questions, on the topic of working towards a PTP system that works better for individuals, families, community providers, and hospitals alike. I don't have all the answers – in fact, no one group, or organization does on such a complex issue. We've seen that bringing together the perspectives outlined in LD 1799 to assess current challenges and identify actionable solutions works. Now is the time to take the opportunity to build on this track record of successful collaboration and further strengthen Maine's continuum of care when it needs it most.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully urge the committee to support LD 1799.

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

Respectfully,



Adam Bloom-Paicopolos, MPP
Executive Director

¹ Maine Department of Health and Human Services. *LD 869 Stakeholder Report*. February 2022.
<https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/8084>.