

Good afternoon members of the Health and Human Services Committee,
My name is Becky d'Haiti. I would like to thank DHHS for bringing this issue forward for review.

I have an adult child with severe mental illness. My husband and I are his guardians. One of the primary symptoms of his illness is anosognosia, or lack of insight of his disease. This makes him reluctant to take medication as he does not recognize the need for it. In the past, while unmedicated, he traveled to foreign countries and placed himself in harms way. He had all his belongings stolen several times and on another occasion was arrested for irrational behavior. He has had episodes of violence or threatened violence to himself.

Our son has been the most stable while on a progressive treatment plan. He was hospitalized in the summer of 2024 and we were able to obtain a PTP. Throughout 2025 he was very stable. We sought to maintain this stability by extending the PTP. The ACT team at CHCS and Dorothea Dix Hospital were unable to file an extension. As guardians, my husband and I were able to file for the extension but due to the changes in the way the PTP is handled, we were notified by Bangor District Court that we would need to obtain an attorney. It was difficult to find an attorney familiar with the PTP process. Through the work of National Shattering the Silence organization, we were able to find a very proficient attorney. Through his excellent assistance, we were able to get an extension. The longer our son remains on medication the more hope we have that he might gain some insight to the benefits of treatment.

I decided to speak today on behalf of families that are unable to afford an attorney. I am a registered nurse. I am able to work an extra shift almost any week if I need money for an unexpected expense or bill. Most Maine families do not have that luxury. I would ask that you consider the cost of hiring an attorney for the average Maine family when you consider this bill. Families need the opportunity to request PTP extensions without worry of extreme financial distress.

My family and I have found the PTP an invaluable tool to assist our loved one in maintaining a stable, productive life and avoid the added expense and heartbreak of another hospitalization. I want every family that seeks to extend a PTP for their loved one to have the same opportunity I have had and not be handcuffed by the expense.

Thank you for your time.

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