

**Testimony Before the Maine Health and Human Services Committee
In Support of LD 1989 – An Act to Clarify Reimbursement for Progressive
Treatment Programs**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee—thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **LD 1989**.

My name is Bob Staples, and I am here to urge the Committee to strengthen LD 1989 by fully aligning reimbursement policy with Maine's Progressive Treatment Program statute.

Progressive Treatment Programs, or PTPs, are a critical tool for individuals with severe brain disorders who, because of illness—not choice—cannot consistently recognize their need for treatment. When implemented appropriately, PTPs reduce repeated crises, prevent homelessness and incarceration, and save lives.

LD 1989 takes an important step by clarifying reimbursement for legal costs associated with PTPs. However, as currently written, reimbursement remains too narrowly framed.

Under existing Maine law, PTPs may be initiated or renewed by **legal guardians and law enforcement officers**, not just mental health care providers. Yet reimbursement practices often exclude these authorized actors, discouraging timely and lawful intervention.

Guardians are often the last line of protection for a loved one who is deteriorating. Law enforcement officers are frequently the first to identify dangerous cycles of crisis. Medical personnel—including physicians and hospital clinicians—are in a position to recognize serious medical and neurological drivers of instability. If the statute authorizes these individuals to initiate or renew a PTP, **LD 1989 should ensure they are eligible for reimbursement as well.**

I urge the Committee to amend LD 1989 to explicitly allow reimbursement for **legal guardian's legal council, law enforcement officers, as well as mental health care providers—public or private—for both initiation and renewal of PTPs legal costs.**

I also strongly support including a **clear cap of \$3,500 per reimbursement**. This cap promotes accountability, protects taxpayer funds, and reduces the risk of excessive billing or fraud, while still allowing legitimate legal costs to be reimbursed.

This is a targeted, responsible fix. It does not expand the use of PTPs or reduce due process protections. It simply aligns reimbursement policy with existing law and adds a necessary fiscal safeguard.

When reimbursement is unclear or unavailable, PTPs are delayed until harm occurs. Clarifying eligibility and setting a firm cap will help ensure earlier, safer intervention and better outcomes for individuals, families, and the State of Maine.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of LD 1989.