



Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 21, Home and Community Benefits for Members with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder

January 28, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2117.

My name is Rebecca Lachance, and I am the Director of Adult Case Management at Woodfords Family Services in Westbrook. Our team began providing case management services to Natalie and her family when she turned 18; she is now 32 years old.

Throughout her life, Natalie has received unwavering support from her loving family. Her mother, Alice Pelletier, is her legal guardian and makes all decisions on Natalie's behalf, as Natalie is nonverbal and unable to communicate her choices. Natalie requires 24/7 total care to complete all activities of daily living, including personal hygiene and toileting, and she cannot be left alone at any time due to significant health and safety concerns.

Natalie currently resides in Freeport and receives 24/7 agency home support through Serenity Residential Care. This arrangement has allowed her to remain in her community, maintain lifelong routines, and continue receiving daily support from her family. This is all Natalie has ever known. She has never had a roommate, having lived exclusively with her parents.

Given Natalie's high level of need, introducing a roommate presents significant challenges. Natalie experiences periods of dysregulation that may include pacing, pushing, repeatedly getting up and down from the ground, screaming, and disrobing. During these episodes, she has little awareness of others around her. The impact on a housemate would be profound and could pose serious safety and emotional concerns for all involved.

A request for an ADA modification to allow Natalie to live alone was denied. Following that denial, the team pursued identifying a roommate through the vendor call process. However, more than a year later, no appropriate match has been identified. The current 30-day timeframe is not sufficient. In practice, this equates to only 20–22 working days, which is not a realistic window to identify, meet, and thoroughly vet a potential roommate and complete a safe and thoughtful move-in process. Even when a potential match is identified, the person-centered planning and approval process alone can take several additional weeks.

More time is needed to ensure that consumers and their guardians are afforded meaningful choice regarding who they live with and where they live, while maintaining health, safety, and dignity.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. I respectfully urge you to support LD 2117.

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