

132nd Legislature
***Senate
of Maine***
Senate District 32

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Testimony of Senator Henry Ingwersen introducing
**LD 2065, An Act to Provide One-time Funds to Support the Construction of a
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for At-risk Youth**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Thursday, January 29, 2026

Good morning, Representative Meyer, and fellow colleagues on the Committee on Health and Human Services. As you know, I am Senator Henry Ingwersen, and I represent Senate District 32, which includes Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman. Today, I am very pleased to introduce my bill LD 2065, **“An Act to Provide One-time Funds to Support the Construction of a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for At-risk Youth.”**

LD 2065 aims to fill an anticipated funding gap needed to complete construction of Maine’s first psychiatric residential treatment facility, serving at-risk youth under 21 years old. Construction will be centered around renovating an existing building rather than building new – saving additional costs.

With over 70 Maine kids placed out of state, over 100 more waiting to be sent out of state, and dozens languishing in emergency rooms with nowhere to go, getting this facility built will ensure families stay together through their treatment journey. It will also spare the State from paying millions to send kids away from their families for treatment.

While the financial savings to the State are important, I would be remiss if I did not mention my serious concerns about the safety and well-being of Maine kids receiving treatment in some of these out-of-state facilities. In 2024, the Bangor Daily News reported on residential treatment facilities across the country: These facilities were the subject of federal investigation into their abuse and neglect. As one example, the report raised concerns about a pair of Acadia Health Care facilities in Arkansas, which Maine approved to serve kids in 2018.¹

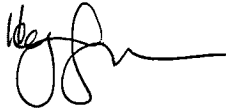
Further on, the article notes particular concerns for Maine children with disabilities. I think it is worth quoting, due to the context: “More youth started to go out of state as community-based behavioral health services eroded, increasing the likelihood that youth with behavioral disorders would escalate to a point where they were institutionalized in hospitals, residential facilities and the state youth prison. The U.S. Department of Justice notified Maine officials in June 2022 that

¹ “Maine pays for kids to go to out-of-state treatment facilities where investigation found abuse,” *The Bangor Daily News*, 18 June 2024.

the over-institutionalization amounted to systemic violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

With LD 2065, we can allocate the funding necessary to finish Maine’s first psychiatric residential treatment facility, where we can keep kids close to their families – and prevent them from ending up in questionable facilities far away.

I thank the Committee for its time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry Ingwersen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Henry Ingwersen

State Senator, Senate District 32

Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman