



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

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**Testimony Neither for Nor Against**

*An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government – LD 2212*

February 17, 2026

Good morning, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services: My name is Charlotte Warren. I am a resident of Hallowell, a policy associate at Moose Ridge Associates, and here to testify on behalf of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine (the Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association representing 34 of Maine's community-based behavioral health agencies who provide mental health and substance use services to over 120,000 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's Executive Director, Adam Bloom-Paicopolos, I am here today to speak neither for nor against LD 2212 but to offer additional comment on what is missing from the budget: **the promised cost-of-living adjustments**. The Alliance respectfully requests the COLAs be restored. Reversing this promise threatens years of progress, creates additional unpredictability, and eliminates Maine's commitment to cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and to the direct care workers and providers who rely on them to keep up with rising costs. Particularly at a time when Maine is experiencing significant cuts to our healthcare system from HR.1, Maine's healthcare workforce and continuum of care cannot stand to bear additional instability.

Predictable COLAs have been a lifeline for behavioral health providers to sustainably plan, keep up with rising wages and operational costs, and keep programs open. Through COLAs, providers have been able to give much-needed raises to direct care staff on the frontlines of this critical work in recent years.

We cannot afford to take steps back that inject instability to an increasingly fragile healthcare system at a time when it most needs consistency and support in the face of federal cuts. Maine must remain committed to its promise of COLAs so that direct care workers can stay in the field and providers can rely on them to ensure that lifesaving services remain open and accessible. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to restore the COLAs in this budget.

Thank you and I'm pleased to answer questions.

Respectfully,

Charlotte Warren, M.A.Ed., M.S.W.