



Testimony of Dan Demeritt – April 11, 2023  
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

**Neither For Nor Against LD 1304**

Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Barriers to Achieving Behavioral Health Integration and Parity

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

My name is Dan Demeritt. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Association of Health Plans (MeAHP). Our member plans include Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Cigna, CVS / Aetna, Community Health Options, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, and UnitedHealthcare. Our private and non-profit plans provide or administer health insurance coverage to about 600,000 Maine people. Our mission as an association is to improve the health of Maine people by promoting affordable, safe, and coordinated healthcare.

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Healthcare and health insurance in Maine are highly regulated industries working to deliver the best possible care while confronting growing workforce and cost pressures. The Board of the Maine Association of Health Plans appreciates the sponsor bringing this bill forward in the spirit of improved access to appropriate and effective behavioral health treatment.

We are concerned, however, that the language directing the task force to study barriers “imposed by insurers and experienced by providers” unfairly characterizes the intent of payors and too narrowly limits the scope of the review.

A better and fairer purpose would be an amended directive to “study barriers among patients in accessing appropriate behavioral health services.”

In addition to that language change, we suggest the committee include a directive that the task force membership includes a representative of a Maine insurance carrier knowledgeable about or involved in providing insurance coverage for behavioral health treatment.

Finally, more than half of all Mainers receive health coverage through public payors – about 400,000 Mainers are enrolled in MaineCare<sup>1</sup> and another 360,000 receive Medicare.<sup>2</sup> An examination of barriers to behavioral health integration and parity should also include public programs within its scope.

Thank you. We look forward to being a resource as the committee works on this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maineahc.org/maine-launches-campaign-to-ensure-maine-care-recipients-dont-lose-health-insurance/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.healthinsurance.org/medicare/maine/>