



April 5, 2023

Senator Donna Bailey
Representative Anne Perry
Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
State House
Augusta ME 04332

Re: LD 1304 Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Barriers to Achieving Behavioral Health Integration and Parity

Dear Representative Perry and Senator Bailey, and Representatives Brennan, Dhalac, and Madigan:

The Maine Psychological Association (MePA) is a membership organization representing psychologists in Maine who work in private practice, at Maine's colleges and universities, and in the public sector. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare.

MePA is in support of this critical emergency legislation to establish a task force to study service barriers to behavioral health treatment in Maine. At a time when there is a serious shortage of mental health providers across the state, on the heels of a national pandemic, we have an unprecedented shortage of BH services for every sector of the population, from school children to the elderly.

Today, an appointment with a BH provider is five times more likely to be out-of-network than a primary care appointment, causing patients to travel long distances, pay high costs, wait long periods, or forgo critical treatment. Coupled with special insurance requirements placed on BH providers, including extra authorizations and credentialing, the roadblocks are compounded.

We are asking for your support to develop this task force to identify the barriers that private and public insurance providers place on BH treatment services. Only by understanding these roadblocks in our insurance system can we improve access, encourage integration with primary care, and streamline our state's ability to provide BH treatment to people of all ages.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie Pratt", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jamie Pratt, PsyD
President

[Maine Psychological Association](http://www.mepa.org)

PO Box 82
Saco, ME 04072