



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 LD 17

Resolve, To Provide Rural Nonmedical Transportation Services to the Elderly and Adults with Disabilities Receiving Home and Community Benefits under the MaineCare Program

Sponsored by Senator Maxmin

2.10.2021

Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Malory Shaughnessy. I am a resident of Westbrook, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's safety net community based mental health and substance use treatment providers. 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, I am here today to speak neither for nor against LD 17, but to share some thoughts about another vulnerable sector of the population receiving MaineCare services that have a real need for nonmedical transportation services -- children that are being treated in residential facilities and their families that cannot find a way to see them nor participate in the needed family meetings and treatment planning.

We agree that access to transportation is limited for many across Maine, especially in rural areas of the state. They may also face barriers to transportation in urban areas, depending on where they are trying to get to and from.

We believe that this pilot would be a great step forward, but would like to see this pilot expanded to include a population that is severely impacted when they do not have access to transportation -- Children covered under Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 97, Appendix D, Child Care Facilities.

In 2019 we testified in support of [LD 1062](#), An Act To Support Maine Families by Providing for Transportation of Parents and Guardians of MaineCare Recipients under 18 Years of Age to Their Appointments, Sponsored by Representative Colleen Madigan. The link is above and this is the summary:

This bill allows nonemergency medical transportation services that are currently available to MaineCare members for transportation to and from providers of medical services to be used by parents or guardians of MaineCare members under 18 years of age to and from providers of medical services when no other means of transportation is available to the parents or guardians.

As you can see, these are actually for transportation to and from actual medical services, but for the parents to attend the prescribed meetings with their children's treatment teams, and pertaining to their plan of care. These are considered "non-medical" and are not covered.

We know that there are many family meetings that occur when a child is receiving treatment in a residential mental health care facility. Meetings in which the family or guardian should be present in order to work with therapists and assist in planning for a return home or for understanding therapeutic interventions and the needs of the child. Transportation for these meetings is not a covered transportation service even though they are truly needed for the care of the covered child.

The Alliance members feel that this vulnerable population should be included in this pilot. Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.