



## **TESTIMONY**

In Support of

### **LD 716, An Act to Enhance and Improve the Maine Developmental Services Oversight and Advisory Board and To Establish the Aging and Disability Mortality Review Panel**

**Brenda Gallant**  
**Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

**March 23, 2021**

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Brenda Gallant. I am the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a statewide non-profit organization that provides advocacy for older adults and adults with disabilities who receive long-term services and supports in all settings. We serve residents in nursing homes, assisted housing including residential care and assisted living facilities, adult day programs and recipients of home care services. Additionally, we serve patients in hospitals who experience barriers in accessing long-term services and supports.

We are pleased to provide testimony in support of this bill that establishes the Aging and Disability Mortality Review Panel to review deaths of and serious injuries to all adults receiving home-based services under Medicaid waiver programs. The bill also makes changes to the laws governing the Maine Developmental Services Oversight and Advisory Board requiring the disclosure of final reports of investigations and clarifies the appointment process for members of the board.

This would provide a well-coordinated and focused approach to facilitate the review of deaths and serious injuries to adults receiving home-based and community-based waiver services. This legislation requires a Panel Coordinator who is a registered nurse, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or physician employed by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The Panel Coordinator position would be critical in supporting the work and effectiveness of the multidisciplinary panel. Funds for this position are proposed in the Governor's Biennial Budget. Additionally, the panel would bring a broad range of expertise necessary for a comprehensive review of cases and the opportunity to make recommendations for system change to improve

protections for adults receiving services.

We believe that this model will be important in addressing system change to better serve vulnerable adults. We are pleased that we are included to serve as a panel member.

Thank you for your consideration.